

FORWARD

Municipal planning is a continuing process. A plan may have a publication date; however, the planning process is never ending. A master planning process that does not include an opportunity for regular review or revisions will mean that the plan will become out of date and useless as a guide for municipal growth over time.

The 1997 Master Plan was adopted on February 3, 1997 subsequent to public review and comment on 14 Jan 1997. The up-date reflects the year 2000 census data and other current basic inputs as well as the changes to the Town's Ordinances since the issue of the 1997 Revision. In addition, the maps are now based on revised Town Road Map and reflect the latest revisions of source data.

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I. HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Plainfield has a rich social and architectural history. Its residents have consistently supported the preservation of the Town's historic resources. The preservation of these resources is fundamental to the retention of a sense of place and identity for the Town. Surviving structures from days gone by contribute to the Town's character and individuality and lend a sense of continuity and community.

Plainfield is fortunate: the main streets of both Meriden and Plainfield villages are lined predominantly with buildings built in the 1800's and early 1900's. The lack of intrusive commercial development in the village centers has preserved their attractiveness and their character. Throughout the town there are over thirty 18th Century buildings, and another 109 buildings built between 1800 and 1850, the majority in excellent condition. The fact that most of these older buildings are in excellent condition is evidence that they have been cared for over the years and that there is a tradition of respect for older structures in the Town.

The Cornish Colony, which flourished between 1885-1930, brought many famous artists to the Plainfield/Cornish area. These artists and their families, who made Plainfield their summer or year-round home, contributed not just to the Plainfield economy, but also fostered local interest in drama, arts and crafts, and cultural activities. The faculty and students of Kimball Union Academy, founded in 1813, have also contributed to the intellectual and artistic life of the community.

In addition to historic structures, areas with proximity to water logically hold great potential for prehistoric and historic archaeological areas. The eastern banks of Sumner's Falls, the low-lying meadows of the Sprague property and the land across the Connecticut River from the mouth of the Ottauquechee River are known to be rich archaeologically. These areas, and possibly others in meadows on the lower terraces of the Connecticut River, should be protected for their archaeological potential.

TOOLS FOR PRESERVATION

To date, the continued protection of Plainfield's historic resources has been accomplished largely through individual action and community-wide respect for the Town's historic assets. However, there are a number of tools available for a Town's historic preservation efforts. Most important is a local group dedicated to local history such as the Plainfield Historical Society. A longer list of tools may be found in the 1987 Plainfield Master Plan.

Historic Resource Survey

There are several advantages to undertaking an historic resource survey. In addition to providing a permanent written and photographic record of a town's architecture, a good inventory is the most basic of preservation tools and can be used to establish historic districts or to prepare nominations for listing of historic structures on the National Register of Historic Places. Although no complete historic resource survey of Plainfield has been done, there are documents that could contribute to one. The first is an architectural survey of many of Plainfield's pre 1850 buildings, which was done by Philip Zea in 1974. The second was a series of historic rambles through Meriden, East Plainfield

and Plainfield Village, organized by Mr. Zea. It includes a map, sketch and brief description of each structure. In 1984, an intern with the UV Regional Planning Commission completed a windshield survey of most of the Town, the first step in the survey process. In 2000 Jane Stephenson wrote walking brochures describing the architectural and social history of over 90 homes in Plainfield and Meriden villages. Finally the town history, Choice White Pines and Good Land published in 1991 chronicles the development of the people and built environment of the Town. All of these documents provide a useful starting point for a comprehensive survey of the Town.

National Register of Historic Places

Listing on the National Register of Historic Places is another way to acknowledge cultural resources that are worthy of preservation. Five local sites are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Meriden Covered Bridge (1890), the Mother's and Daughter's Clubhouse (1902), the Plainfield Town Hall (1798, moved to present site in 1840), the Meriden Town Hall (1896) and the Blow-Me-Down Grange #234 (1839). A number of other Plainfield sites are potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register. National Register listing can be an important tool for identifying and planning the future of significant resources. Listing can act as a catalyst to change public perception and improve an area's image, but cannot in itself prevent major detrimental alterations or even demolition. It remains an important first step toward historic awareness, respect and protection.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES REFLECTED IN PRESERVATION WORK

Responding to the 1993 Community Survey, respondents to the survey showed a high level of support for the preservation of historic buildings and landmarks, specifically the covered bridge, town halls, granges and churches. Both the Meriden and Plainfield town halls were extensively renovated in 1995, and the Town offices and Police Department were relocated to the Meriden Town Hall.

The Plainfield Historical Society, founded in 1978, and occupying the former Mother's and Daughter's Clubhouse, has a growing collection of artifacts, photographs and records related to Plainfield's history. The Historical Society meets monthly throughout the year, presenting speakers and stimulating discussion about a variety of topics related to local history. In 1992, the Historical Society took responsibility for the fund raising and preservation of the Maxfield Parrish stage set. The restoration of the stage set was completed in 1993. The Historical Society has also replaced the theater curtain and continues to raise funds for other needed changes to the

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Historical Society should update the oral histories and continue to inform and educate townspeople about the history of Plainfield.
2. Signs designating significant historic buildings and sites should be erected. The Historic Sites Committee of the Plainfield Historic Society has developed a priority list of sites to be marked, and should work with the Town on accessing appropriate Town trust funds for signage. (*signs are to be installed in the spring of 2003*)

I. HISTORIC RESOURCES

3. The Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board should develop ordinances designed to protect historic buildings, and should investigate creation of historic districts in Plainfield and Meriden Villages.
4. A comprehensive inventory and evaluation of Plainfield's historic resources and visual resources should be undertaken.
5. To develop land use regulations that ensure that new development in areas with historic buildings, archeological sites and scenic views is appropriate and sympathetic to existing neighborhood character

II. NATURAL RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Plainfield's natural resources contribute in a very positive way to the quality of life in Town. The Town's forests, surface and groundwater, clean air, wildlife, scenic vistas, productive soils, varied terrain and minerals are all natural resources. Following this brief introduction, this chapter documents community attitudes about natural resources, describes the natural features of the Town, sets forth goals to guide resource use, and recommends ways to guide and control the development of the Town's important natural resources, so that they will be conserved for the use and enjoyment of future residents of the Town.

The use of natural resources of the Town can be controlled by regulation, but this effort may not be well received without outreach to all landowners and residents to inform them about the Town's natural resources and their values. Educational efforts should be made to promote the ways that resources can be used on a sustainable basis with best management practices in a planned and thoughtful manner. In this way, our resources are not only protected by laws, but also by the people who use and value them on a daily basis. The recommendations in this Plan are based on the premise that Plainfield's natural heritage should be preserved and that future development of the Town be guided by the ability of the land to support that development.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

Respondents to the Plainfield 1993 Community Attitude Survey were almost unanimous in their appreciation for Plainfield's natural resources. Over 87 percent of the respondents felt that preservation of the natural resources, such as prime agricultural land (138), wetland (132), floodplains (115), wildlife habitat (148), shorelines of rivers and streams (134), and scenic views (119), is a very important factor in keeping the rural character of the Town. Thus, the Town has a responsibility to maintain strong support for its natural resources through regulation and education.

SETTING AND TOPOGRAPHY

Located in the northern portion of the Connecticut River Valley, Plainfield is situated opposite the confluence of the Ottauquechee and Connecticut Rivers. Across Town, there is markedly varied terrain, including a mix of slopes, swampy lowlands, river bottom, upland terraces, and the mountain summits of Croydon Mountain. The Town is divided into three general regions, flat terrace by the River, hilly uplands, and the Croydon Mountain range.

SOILS

Soils are an important natural resource, since it is soil properties such as depth, permeability, wetness, slope and susceptibility to erosion that define the land's capability to support development. Plainfield's soils also yield sand and gravel, important for the construction industry and road maintenance, and are the foundation for the Town's agricultural sector. Map II-1, shows the agricultural soils in Plainfield by Farmland Class as defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The three classes are: NH Prime, Statewide Importance and Locally Important Farmland soils.

1. Windsor-Unadilla Variant-Agawam: Deep, nearly level to very steep, excessively-drained and well-drained, sandy and loamy soils formed in glacial outwash deposits; found along the Connecticut River and Blow-Me-Down Brook. This is generally classified as farm soil of Statewide Importance
2. Bernardston-Cardigan-Kearsarge-Dutchess: Deep, moderately-deep, and shallow gently-sloping to very steep, well-drained and somewhat excessively-drained, loamy soils formed in glacial till; found between the foot of Grantham Mountain and the Connecticut River; this is the most common soil association found in Plainfield. This is generally classified as Prime farmland.
3. Colton-Adams-Rumney: Deep, nearly level to very steep, excessively-drained and poorly-drained, loamy and sandy soils formed in glacial outwash deposits and alluvium; found in Meriden Village and just below the headwaters of the Blow-Me-Down Brook.
4. Monadnock-Marlow-Lyman: Deep and shallow, gently sloping to very steep, well-drained and somewhat excessively-drained, loamy soils formed in glacial till; found on the west slope of Grantham Mountain. This is generally classified as farmland of local importance.
5. Monadnock-Lyman-Rock Outcrop: Deep and shallow, moderately steep to very steep, well-drained to somewhat excessively-drained, loamy soils formed in glacial till; found on the eastern mountain ridge of the town.

SLOPE

Plainfield has areas of steep slopes throughout Town. These areas are also identified on Map II-1. A slope greater than 15 percent creates problems for most development and land with slopes over 25% are generally considered to be undevelopable. Site preparation, road maintenance, snow removal, and other municipal service provisions are difficult and costly in steep areas.

Areas with slopes greater than 25 percent grade should be left as open space for forestry, wildlife habitat, and outdoor recreational uses. Erosion, the loss of soil, and sedimentation, the flushing of sediment into waterways, are two of the most serious negative impacts of developing steep slopes. Any development in a steeply sloped area, but especially the installation of a road or driveway, should be carefully planned and closely monitored in order to prevent erosion and consequent sedimentation. Plainfield's Subdivision Regulations, Site Plan Review Regulations and Zoning Ordinance should be revised to reference the standards contained in 'Storm water Management and Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in New Hampshire' published by the Rockingham County Conservation District. The submission of an erosion and sedimentation plan in conformance with those standards should be required for development in even moderately sloped areas. Local officials can be trained to monitor sites for erosion and sedimentation control compliance, or, the Town can pass on to the applicant the expense of having an engineer inspect the site while development is underway, and afterward, to ensure that the erosion and sedimentation control plan has been followed.

Since steep slopes are associated with Plainfield's scenic hillsides, aesthetic concerns are also raised by the development of steep areas. The Town's scenic resources, their values, and approaches to preservation are discussed in a later section of this Chapter.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS

The bulk of Plainfield's sand and gravel resource is on the western side of Town, along the Connecticut River and in large degree co-extensive with Plainfield's important and prime farmland. Commercial excavation operations are currently conducted both to the north and south of Plainfield and on both sides of the Connecticut River. In addition, Plainfield operates a municipal pit along the River in the southwestern corner of the Town (see Map II-1).

The current Plainfield Zoning Ordinance allows, by special exception, "removal of natural material operations" in three of the Town's five specifically delineated zoning districts (Rural Residential Zone, Rural Conservation I Zone, and the Rural Conservation II zone). Once a use permit has been granted, applicants then move to the Planning Board, designated as the "regulator" per RSA 155-E, for a site plan review procedure.

Pursuant to RSA 155-E, in September of 1992, the Plainfield Planning Board adopted specific regulations to govern earth excavations. Compliance with these regulations has become part of the site plan review process for proposed operations. In addition, in 1992, existing operations were given the opportunity to become registered. Three pits were registered during this process: Meriden Gravel -Willow Brook Road, Marsh-Red Hill Road, and Temple-Route 12A. These three, combined with the municipal pit, constitute the four "approved" operations in Plainfield.

Records from the annual reports filed by the private operations indicate that an average of about 15,000 total yards a year are removed from these pits. These same annual reports indicate that the three operations as of 2001 had approximately 250,000 yards of commercially viable material remaining.

The Town removes approximately 9,100 yards of sand and gravel per year from the pit for municipal operations. It is estimated that this operation will continue to meet the gravel needs of the community for another ten years. Sand resources may be depleted in less than ten years.

AGRICULTURAL SOILS

Agricultural soils are an important natural resource that are both highly productive and limited in quantity. On the basis of soil quality, moisture supply, availability, and slope, the Soil Conservation Service has defined important farmland in three categories: 1) prime soils; 2) agricultural soils of statewide importance; and 3) agricultural soils of local importance. Soil types with the prime soils classification are listed in Table II-1. Not surprisingly, Plainfield's agricultural soils are located along the Connecticut River and in areas which now support development, such as Plainfield Village.

Since areas with good agricultural soils are often cleared and easily accessible, they are also easily developed. Preservation of farmland is more than a romantic notion. Land with a high or good potential for agricultural uses is a natural resource, which is being depleted and cannot be replaced. Our present food production system functions in a way that it is now more cost effective to rely on land out of the Region. However, economies change, often rapidly, as was experienced during the oil embargo in 1973. Productive agricultural land is certain to be more highly valued because of its agricultural potential. It would be unwise and unfair of our generation to make future generations in

II. NATURAL RESOURCES

Plainfield dependent on food and fiber produced elsewhere due to the lack of tillable, productive land.

Farmland protection strategies include acquisition of development rights, land banking, zoning, involvement of land trusts and cluster subdivision; however, it is important that the Town assign values to its farmland to focus its protection efforts in a reasonable way. The Soil Conservation Service has developed a land evaluation and site assessment system (LESA) to aid towns in developing policies and programs concerning agricultural land. LESA considers the soil potential to produce an agricultural crop and non-soil factors, such as size of a parcel of land, access, availability of public services, agricultural infrastructure, and investment in agriculture. Ranking farmland in this way would give the Town the database to discriminate between development proposals on different parcels of farmland and to direct preservation efforts. A LESA evaluation should be undertaken to establish a priority system for protection of farmland and water resources in Town.

MAP- II-1-PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS

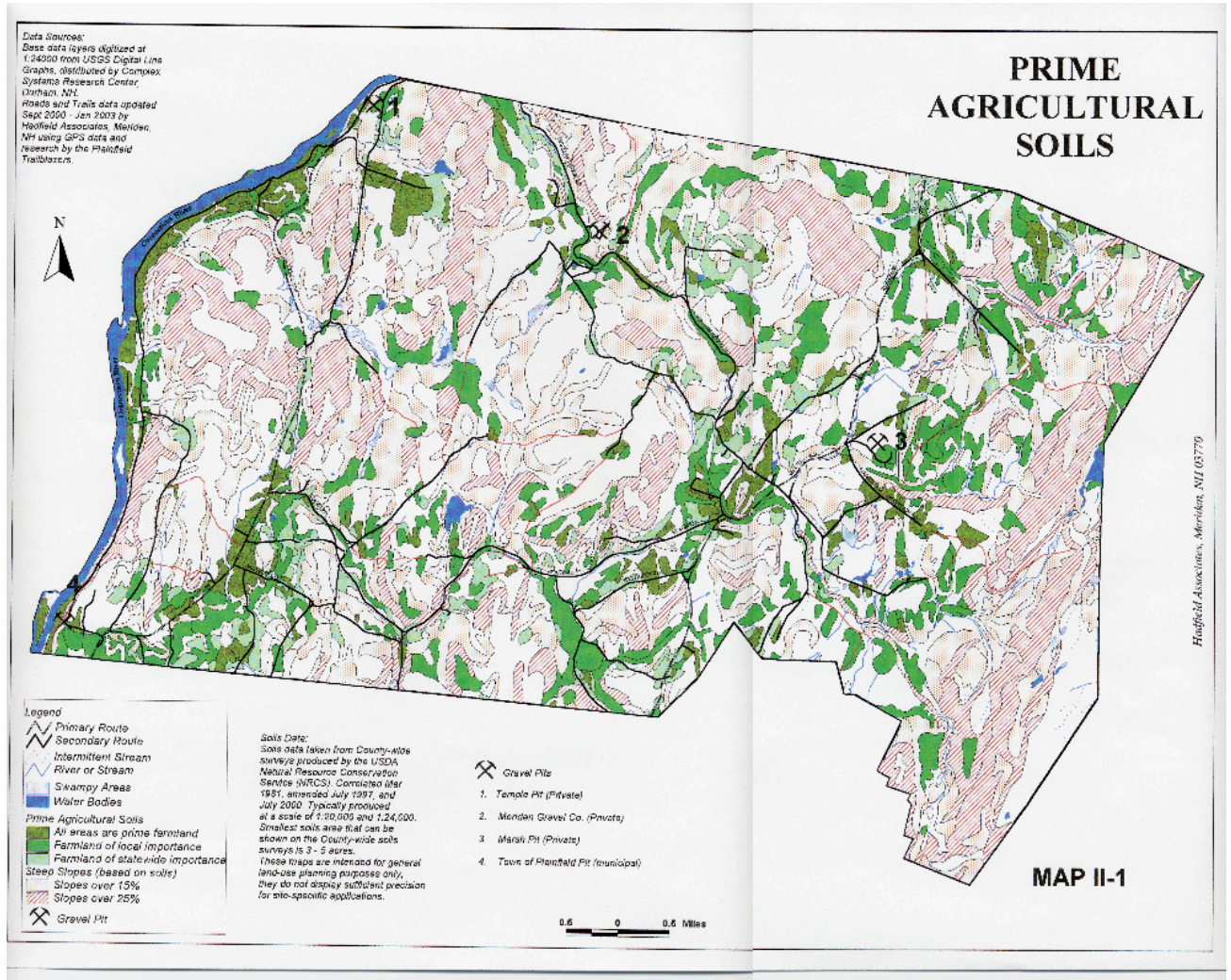


TABLE II-1-PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS

<u>Map Symbol</u>	<u>Soil Name</u>
AgA	Agawam very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
AgB	Agawam very fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
BdB	Bernardston silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
DtB	Dutchess silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
Ha	Hadley silt loam, frequently flooded
HcA	Haven very fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
MaB	Marlow loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
McB	Monadnock fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
NnA	Ninigret fine sandy loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes
Of	Ondawa fine sandy loam
PcA	Peru loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
PcB	Peru loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
PtA	Pittstown silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
PtB	Pittstown silt loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
SdA	Scio silt loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
SnA	Sunapee fine sandy loam, 0 to 3 percent slopes
SnB	Sunapee fine sandy loam, 3 to 8 percent slopes
Wn	Winooski silt loam

Source: Soil Survey of Sullivan County

WATER RESOURCES

Plainfield's water resources include its surface waters, aquifers, wetlands and floodplains. Maps II-2 and II-3 delineate these resources. New Hampshire towns are becoming increasingly concerned about their water resources. Plainfield needs to be protective of water resources to ensure continued potability of its groundwater and continued use of its surface waters by people and wildlife.

Plainfield's ponds, brooks, streams and the Connecticut River are one type of water resource: surface water. Historically, surface water, being easily accessible, was used for domestic purposes, to water farm animals and for waste disposal. Today, surface waters are best appreciated for their recreation and scenic value; they are also important for fire fighting and wildlife. Plainfield also has one of the largest fish hatcheries in the state.

Plainfield has two large ponds, Moses Pond and Mud Pond, and a number of smaller ponds, including Chase Pond and Sky Ranch Pond. Moses Pond covers nearly 25 acres. It is remote with no easy access and only one house on its shores. Mud Pond is situated in a low area. It is home to at least one lodge of beavers and a variety of waterfowl. Chase Pond, located just west of the Grantham Town Line, is a deep pond accessible via an old woods way. Plainfield is fortunate to have these undeveloped water bodies. Efforts to protect their character and provide public access should continue.

Plainfield's streams and brooks drain four major watersheds. Ultimately, all of Plainfield's surface water flows into the Connecticut River. Table II-2 presents Plainfield's streams and brooks by watershed.

TABLE II-2-PLAINFIELD'S STREAMS AND BROOKS BY WATERSHED

<u>Blow-Me-Down Brook</u>	<u>Blood's Brook</u>	<u>Mascoma River</u>	<u>Connecticut River</u>
Bryant Brook	Cole Brook	Great Brook	Beaver Brook
Burr Brook	Daniels Brook		Hanchette Brook
Clay Brook	Hibbard Brook		
Penniman Brook	Hilliard Brook		
Shipman Brook	Newton Brook		
Wine Brook			

The Connecticut River is Plainfield's most valuable and under-utilized natural resource. Since the River quality has markedly improved due to the installation of sewage treatment plants upriver and more careful use of the riverbank, Plainfield has a relatively clean recreation resource along its entire western border. Road salt erosion, agricultural runoff and failed septic systems still pose pollution threats to the River. Efforts should be made to control these sources of contamination. The 'falls' area of the River is unique and should be preserved.

Plainfield's fourteen named brooks drain four watersheds into the Connecticut River. As protection against pollution and sedimentation, land within 100 feet of the banks of Plainfield's brooks and streams should not be built upon or developed. These lands should be maintained as open space. The resulting green ways would provide wildlife habitat and both active and passive recreation opportunities. Buffer areas of at least 125 feet should be maintained between surface waters and

septic systems to decrease the risk of contamination from septic effluent.

GROUNDWATER AND AQUIFERS

All Plainfield residents, even those who are served by community water systems, rely on groundwater for drinking. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, only 15 households in Plainfield take drinking water from a source other than a community water system or private well. Thus, while over 850 households tap into a groundwater source, very little is known about aquifers in Town. An aquifer is simply a water-bearing geologic formation. Water moves into and out of an aquifer. If water is pumped from an aquifer more quickly than it is recharged, users may experience a dry well.

There are two types of aquifers, unconsolidated glacial deposits, and crystalline bedrock. Unconsolidated glacial deposits, made up of sand and gravel, both store and transmit large quantities of water, and form the most productive aquifers in New Hampshire. The unconsolidated aquifer of sand or gravel is commonly capable of yielding more than 200 gallons per minute. The water level in a stratified drift aquifer can usually be found at between 40' to 80' beneath the surface, but can exceed 100' in gravel, sand, silt and clay deposits, common to valley bottoms.

The crystalline bedrock aquifer is a complex of igneous and metamorphic rock that contains economic yields of water only in open fractures. Wells that penetrate bedrock commonly yield dependable supplies of water suitable for single-family domestic needs. For this reason, bedrock is the principal aquifer for domestic wells. These generally range in depth of 100' to 600' and yield around 10 gallons per minute or less.

The United States Geologic Survey has mapped areas of high groundwater availability. These areas are shown on Map II-2. They are located at the confluence of Blood's and Daniels Brooks, Pratt's Corner, Meriden Village and the eastern portion of the Blow-Me-Down Brook. Areas of low, but good, groundwater availability occur along Blow-Me-Down Brook east of 12A and along the Connecticut River.

An in-depth study of Plainfield's aquifers should be undertaken to identify recharge areas, aquifer and subsurface movement of water. Consideration should be given to land banking areas of high water yield near existing settlements for use as a well field, should individual wells or the existing community wells no longer be suitable sources of drinking water.

Map II-2 also presents information compiled by the New Hampshire Water Supply and Pollution Control Division pertaining to potential sources of non-point pollutants which could threaten the quality of Plainfield's groundwater. Non-point threats to water quality include septic systems, salted roads and uncovered salt piles, leaky underground storage tanks, industrial sites, waste disposal facilities, agricultural land, and highways. Underground storage tanks are now recognized as serious threats to groundwater quality. Research has shown it is not uncommon for underground tanks to develop leaks. Given New England's acidic soils and rain, most tanks over 15 years old are expected to have leaks. Unfortunately, toxic substances, such as gasoline and fuel, are commonly stored in underground tanks. State regulation of tanks with volumes larger than 1,100 gallons has been adopted. New tanks have to meet strict design standards and all tanks are subject to regular testing. Regulation of tanks with volumes less than 1,100 gallons is left to localities. Since most residential storage tanks would not be monitored by the State, Plainfield should take the initiative to protect its residents' wells by sponsoring a leak detection and tank replacement program.

Development controls should prevent uses which present risks to water quality from locating in aquifer recharge areas. Educating residents and businesses about the proper disposal of hazardous wastes is an important safeguard. The Town should also promote regional hazardous waste collections and encourage residents and businesses to participate.

WETLANDS

Wetlands are areas where water is a primary factor controlling the environment and associated plant and animal life. Wetlands can be thought of as the transitional habitat which occurs between upland, and aquatic environments where the water table is at or near the surface of the land, and where the land is covered by shallow water that may be up to a few feet deep. Swamps, marshes and bogs are all wetlands. Most wetlands can be identified by hydrophytes, wetland plants, which tolerate various degrees of flooding or live in frequently saturated areas. Habitats with flowing or deep waters, such as rivers, streams and ponds, are closely associated with wetlands. (See Map II-3)

Wetlands were long considered to be wastelands, but are now recognized and valued for their:

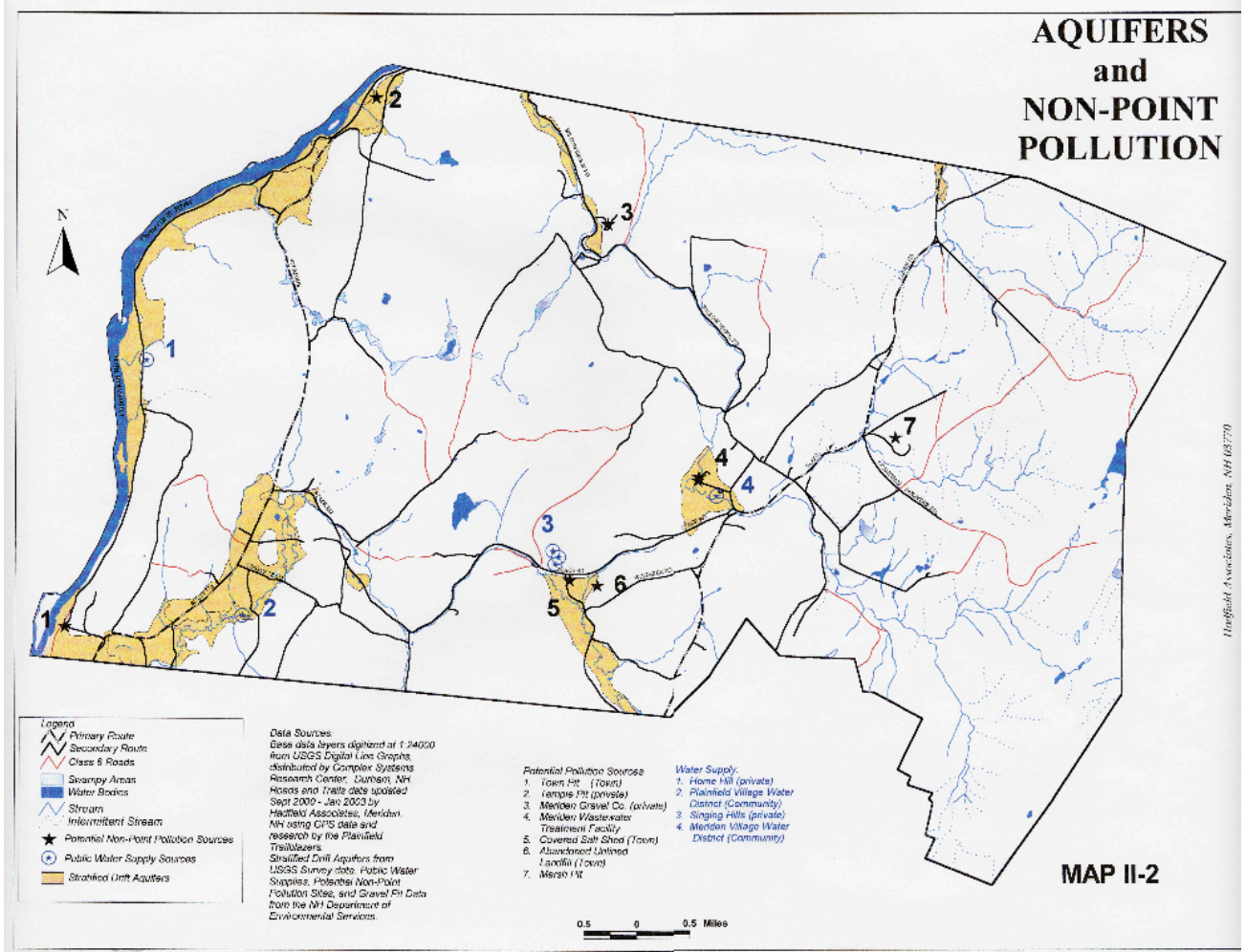
- Ability to provide temporary water storage for flood waters;
- Contribution to the quality of the surface and groundwater by chemical and physical actions;
- Ability to buffer the effects of erosion and runoff;
- Important role in providing habitat, spawning grounds and feeding areas for aquatic life, waterfowl and other wildlife;
- Provision of outdoor recreation opportunities; and
- Contribution to community open space and scenic beauty.

Filling or draining wetlands changes the natural drainage pattern (displacing water so it ends up somewhere else), and inhibits groundwater recharge and floodwater retention. Thus, wetlands are best left alone to function as nature's sponges and filters. Development should not occur in wetlands or compromise their important position in the water cycle and life cycle of many animals.

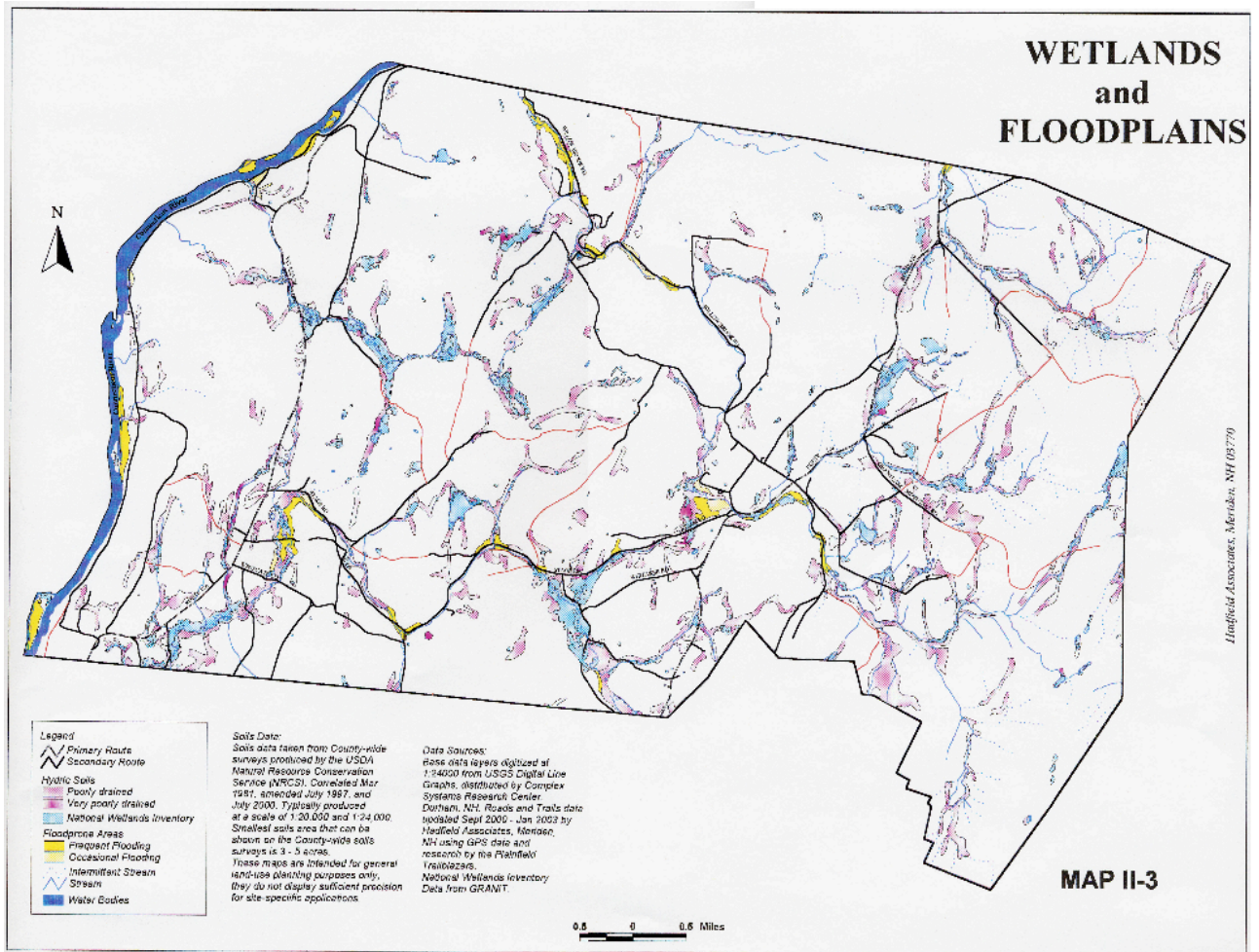
FLOODPLAINS

Floodplains are areas prone to flooding. Formed along rivers and streams, they are among the most productive agricultural lands in the world. When flooding occurs, often in the springtime, high water carries and deposits on floodplains enriched silt from overflowing rivers and streams. The soil is, therefore, regularly rejuvenated with the result, in many cases, that it is very good for agriculture. Vegetative, floodplains are different from swamps, marshes and bogs, because woody plants, such as silver maple, fir and spruce, dominate them. Floodplains serve as storage areas for water during times of flooding and provide travel corridors for wildlife. Plainfield's floodplains are shown on Map II-3.

MAP II-2- AQUIFER/NON-POINT POLLUTION SOURCE MAP



MAP II-3-WETLANDS/FLOOD PLAINS MAP



The federal government takes a special interest in the development of floodplains because it makes available federal flood insurance. The federal government's position is that no development should occur in the floodplain, which would increase the flood hazard downstream or would increase by more than 50% the value of a property located in the floodplain. Increasing the value of a property in the floodplain only sets the federal government up for greater loss in the event of a flood.

In order to enable landowners to qualify for federally insured flood insurance, the Town, in its administration of site plan review, subdivision regulations and zoning, must regulate development in the floodplain using federal standards. Communities may prevent all development in the floodplain. This approach is recommended in special flood hazard areas as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Carefully regulated uses should be allowed in floodplain areas where flooding is less frequent. Certain uses, such as hazardous waste storage sites and landfills, would be inappropriate for a floodplain location because of the long-term potential for water contamination in the event of a flood.

SCENIC RESOURCES

Another of Plainfield's important assets is the way the Town looks. Its varied terrain and traditional settlement pattern are of high visual quality. Individual landscape elements, as well as the overall pattern of structures, open space and vegetation contribute significantly to the quality of life.

Plainfield's hills and tree-lined rural roads offer scenic views in all directions, often as far distant to the west as the Killington Range in Vermont. Plainfield's agricultural heritage is evident in its open fields, although more and more, stone walls which used to delineate pastures are now becoming hidden by forest and brush. With the changes in the Town's economic base and growth in population, it is imperative that the Town assess its scenic resources and develop a scenery preservation plan.

The 1993 Community Survey questioned residents about which scenic areas and views they felt deserved protection. Examples given included: Read's Hill, Rte. 12A (north of Plainfield Village), French's Ledges and views along the Connecticut River. Eighty-two percent (82%) of those who responded to this question supported using the Zoning Ordinance to protect these views. A proactive scenic easement program should be undertaken in conjunction with the landowners and Conservation Commission.

Landscape quality is an elusive but important consideration in land use decision-making. There are many benefits to be derived from identifying and improving key elements of the Town's visual quality:

- A high quality town landscape is one that can be viewed and appreciated by both residents and visitors;
- Retaining a high quality landscape encourages community pride. Plainfield's desire for thoughtful use of its land is closely linked to the high quality of the town's landscape;
- When seeking to attract development that will enhance the town's tax base, a community that has retained a high quality landscape will have an advantage over a town that has not chosen

to do so; and

- The development of tourism and tourist related services in a community having an attractive landscape is often possible if the community preserves its landscape.

In order to prevent important visual elements of the Town from being destroyed or compromised, they should be inventoried and their aesthetic qualities identified and understood. State legislation clearly enables towns to consider the aesthetic impacts of development. The importance of a visual resources inventory and evaluation, if the Town is to use aesthetics as a component of its review of proposed developments under site plan review, cannot be over emphasized.

In assessing visual resources, the following categories should be considered:

- Distant views - views with a distant background or large scale panoramas;
- Details at short or medium distance - waterfalls, wetlands, rock formations, rivers and streams; and
- Characteristic scenes - the mixture of pasture, crop, woods, villages, mountains and/or valleys.

The views listed in Table II-3, on the following page, are some of Plainfield's best.

Telecommunications structures pose a special threat to ridge top scenery. Given the current use of Craft's Hill in Lebanon and Mt. Ascutney in Vermont for such towers and antennae, it is recommended that these sites be used rather than hillsides in Plainfield

TABLE II-3-VIEWS AND SCENERY IN PLAINFIELD

<u>Viewing Point</u>	<u>Direction</u>	<u>View</u>
Rte. 12A	To south	View of Plainfield Village, Mt. Ascutney valley and Mt. Ascutney
Rte. 12A	Northerly	Connecticut River
River Road	Southerly	Connecticut River, old cemeteries, fishing, Wildflower Sanctuary
Freeman Hill	Top view	View to southeast: Cornish valley View to west: Vermont, Killington
Kenyon Road	Northeast	Center of Town Road landscape; nice at foliage viewing time
Black Hill Road	Off Rte. 12A	Westerly view: Ascutney, Killington and other Mountains in Vermont
Ladieu Hill Road	Westerly	West to Vermont, Killington
Dodge Road	Northwest	View to Prospect Hill, Plainfield Village
Whitaker Road	Westerly	West to Vermont hills
Penniman Road	Cornish line, east	Grantham Mountain
Colby Hill Road	Easterly	Meriden Village, KUA
Columbus Jordan Rd. Off Colby Hill Rd.		Northeast views, hiking, hunting, conservation land
Bonner Road	Westerly	Views of French's Ledges
Daniels Road	Westerly (from Stage)	Lovely view of Mt. Ascutney
Chellis Road	Westerly	Croydon and Green Mountains
Route 120	North of trailer park/ridge line	Bald Peak Mountain
Route 120	Blinking light	Southwest to Mt. Ascutney
Bean Road	KUA's Brewster	West and Southwest toward Meriden Guest House
French's Ledges	Any	Vermont, neighboring towns, White Mountains

Source: Plainfield Conservation Commission

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

In response to concern about the quality of Plainfield's environment, an assessment of environmental hazards in Town was prepared for inclusion in the Master Plan. A summary of this assessment, and the findings and recommendations of the Town's Emergency Management Team, is reported below to provide further guidance for the protection of the Town's natural resources and the general health and safety of its citizens.

The potential environmental hazards identified include production and transportation of materials in the Town, underground and above ground fuel storage tanks, and acid rain.

Consultation with several sources suggests that groundwater is probably the most threatened resource over which the Town has any degree of control. The threats to groundwater come from several sources, including spills or improper disposal of hazardous materials (both on a residential and commercial scale), leaking underground and aboveground fuel storage tanks, and use in excess of the recharge rate.

The Plainfield Emergency Management Team has considered production and transportation of hazardous materials. Both transportation and production of hazardous materials are presently regulated in New Hampshire; however, enforcement and monitoring activities are not what they might be.

In the case of transportation, better enforcement of existing regulations, together with making available on a statewide basis more personnel trained to respond to an emergency involving hazardous materials, are ways to safeguard the environment of a town like Plainfield. Certainly, the Town's interest would be served by providing funding for Town officials, such as the fire chief, to attend training sessions on dealing with hazardous materials in the event of an accident.

With respect to production of hazardous materials within the Town, it is desirable to afford officials and citizens in the Town with an opportunity to review and control the disposal practices of a potential user of hazardous materials. The Hazardous Materials Study Committee recommends that storage and production of hazardous wastes be included in the list of special exceptions in the Town Zoning Ordinance. If review as a special exception is applied to production or storage at levels requiring state permits or registration under existing regulations, the proposed zoning change would only affect new organizations proposing the handling of hazardous materials, since there are no regulated storage or production facilities in Plainfield at present. Initial reviews and approval of plans for production or storage of hazardous materials seems best done by the Zoning Board; continued monitoring and verification of safety and disposal practices seems best done by the Town Health Officer.

It is estimated that 20 to 40 percent of underground storage tanks in place are leaking undetected on a nationwide basis. The problem of leaking underground storage tanks is especially acute in rural areas, where owners generally have neither the resources nor the training to test and maintain their tanks. To complement State legislation, a local testing program should be implemented. A preliminary measure that should be taken is an inventory of the number and type of tanks within the Town.

SPECIAL PLACES

The natural areas of Plainfield each hold a set of values that appeal to certain groups of people in Town. Respondents to the 1993 Community Attitude Survey have identified special places in Town and these are the places where protection efforts in Town should be focused. Protection efforts may take the form of working with landowners to protect the land through the voluntary donation of conservation easements or fee simple title to the Town or a land trust, or purchasing conservation easements or the property from the landowners. It may be, for some of the places, that a public access agreement or educational outreach about the values of the place would be most beneficial. The Conservation Commission should assess the need associated with each and develop a plan to promote, protect, or make accessible each of the identified special places.

The special places are:

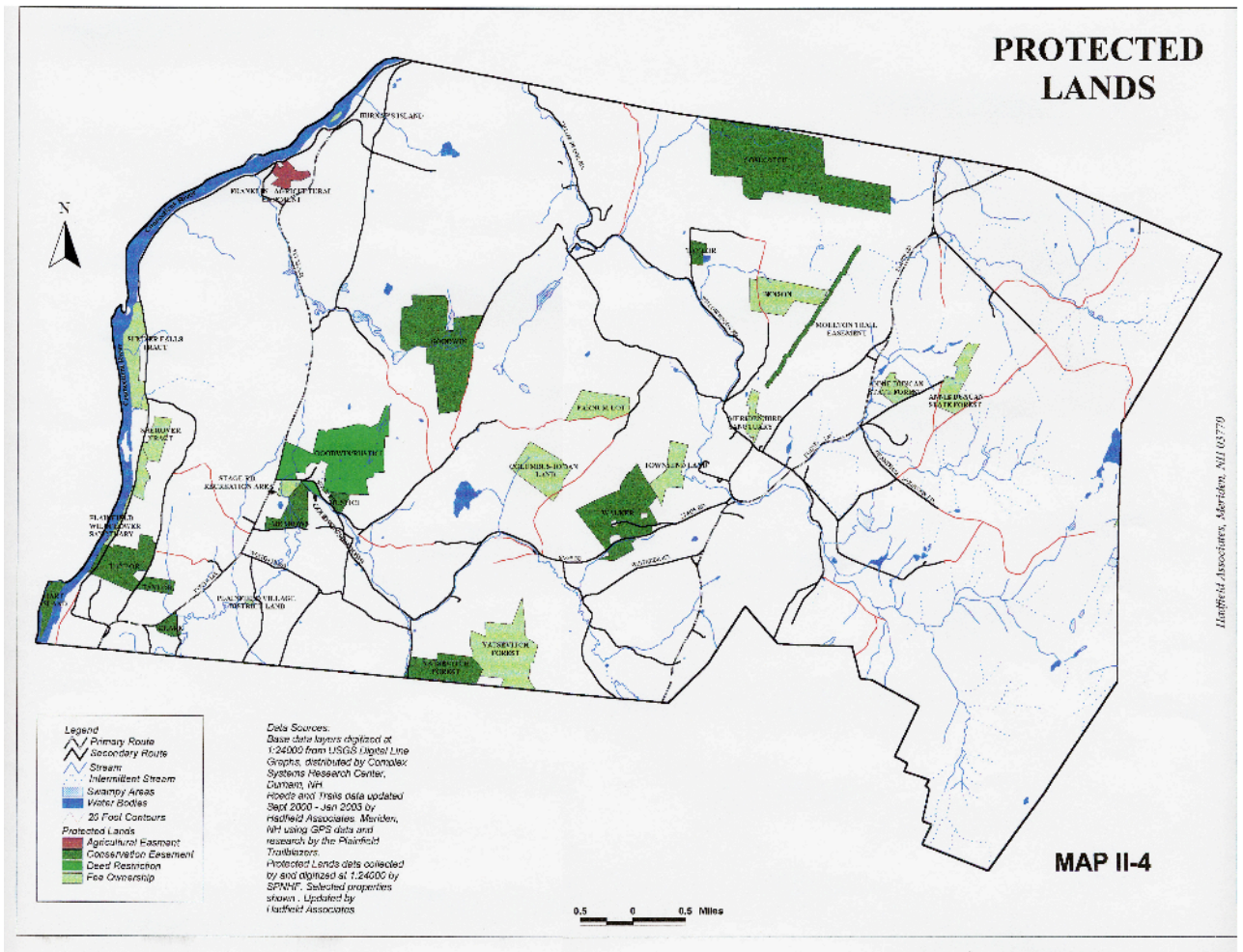
French's Ledges	View of Plainfield Village from 12A north of the Village
Prime farm land	Connecticut River
Mud Pond	Penniman Road wetland
Route 12A wetlands	Snow Mt. Area
Sumner's Falls	

Map II-4 shows the Town's protected lands and the type of protection.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Plainfield is unique in the State as being one of the few communities to designate an official town mollusk, the dwarf wedge mussel, an official town insect, the cobblestone tiger beetle, and an official town plant, Jessup's milk vetch. This, along with the strong support for habitat protection voiced in the 1993 Attitude Survey, suggests that Plainfield residents do care about wildlife and the pressure placed on wildlife by the loss of wildlife habitat. The 1987 Master Plan lists the endangered, threatened and rare species found in Plainfield. These, along with the more common species, such as grouse, white tail deer, fox, bear, etc., must be considered in the Town's future development. The Town should encourage the survival of endangered, threatened and rare species by protecting habitat and insulating these areas from disruptive land uses.

MAPII-4 PROTECTED LANDS



GOALS

- 1) Plainfield's important natural resources should be conserved for the use and enjoyment of residents of the Town.
- 2) Prime agricultural land should be protected from development and should remain in agricultural use.
- 3) Wildlife habitat should be protected and insulated from disruptive land uses and over development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Plainfield's land use controls should be structured to conserve the Town's natural resources.
2. The Town should encourage donations of conservation and agricultural easements to preserve the Community's natural heritage, and should consider selective acquisition of land for public use.
3. Development on slopes over 15 percent should be restricted, and carefully planned and monitored.
4. Land with slopes greater than 25 percent should remain undeveloped.
5. Provisions should be adopted in the Subdivision Regulations, Site Plan Review Regulations, and Zoning Ordinance which reference the erosion and sedimentation control standards contained in Storm Water Management and Erosion and Sedimentation Control Handbook for Urban and Developing Areas in New Hampshire, by the Rockingham County Conservation District.
6. An in-depth study of Plainfield's aquifers should be undertaken to identify aquifer recharge areas and subsurface movement of water. Consideration should be given to land banking areas of high water yield near existing settlements for use as a well field, should individual wells or the existing community wells no longer be suitable sources of drinking water.
7. Development controls should prevent uses which present risks to water quality from locating in aquifer recharge areas.
8. Best management practices for the use of road salt should be implemented.
9. The Conservation Commission should study and make recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Boards regarding the protection of Plainfield's most important scenic views.
10. The Conservation Commission should assess the need associated with each of the identified special places and develop a plan to promote, protect and make accessible each of them.

III - HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

Housing is a basic component of a community's development process, both influencing and influenced by the natural environment, regional development, public services, the community's economic base, transportation, energy patterns and social development.

The population of the Town of Plainfield is projected to grow to 2,650 people by the year 2020. To accommodate this growth, some 120 additional housing units will be needed, an increase of up to 14%. This growth has far-reaching implications for the quality of human life and the character of this community, its housing and local environment.

Plainfield is, above all, a residential town with a high percentage of its developed land area put into residential use (see Land Use Chapter). This chapter reviews the results of the 1993 Community Survey and examines current housing characteristics in Plainfield as compared to the rest of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region, and the State. The chapter then concludes with goals and recommendations for future residential development to meet the needs of Plainfield residents.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The Plainfield Planning Board conducted a community attitude survey during the spring of 1993 as a basis for preparing guidelines for the future development of the Town. The following provides a brief summary of the survey results that relate to attitudes toward new housing in Plainfield.

- Most respondents would prefer to see Plainfield remain, as it is now - a rural/agricultural town that serves as a bedroom community to the surrounding business areas.
- The uncrowded, quiet conditions (88%), scenic quality (74%), and friendly people (61%), were what many survey respondents liked about Plainfield.
- Single-family homes were the type of residential development desired throughout Town by 85% of survey respondents. Respondents felt that multi-family dwellings (59.9%), manufactured housing (49.3 %), and manufactured housing parks (66.9%), should not be allowed in Town.
- Most respondents would like Plainfield to address its responsibility to accommodate affordable housing by permitting accessory apartments and conversion of large homes to apartments in village centers, rather than encouraging construction of new multi-family housing.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

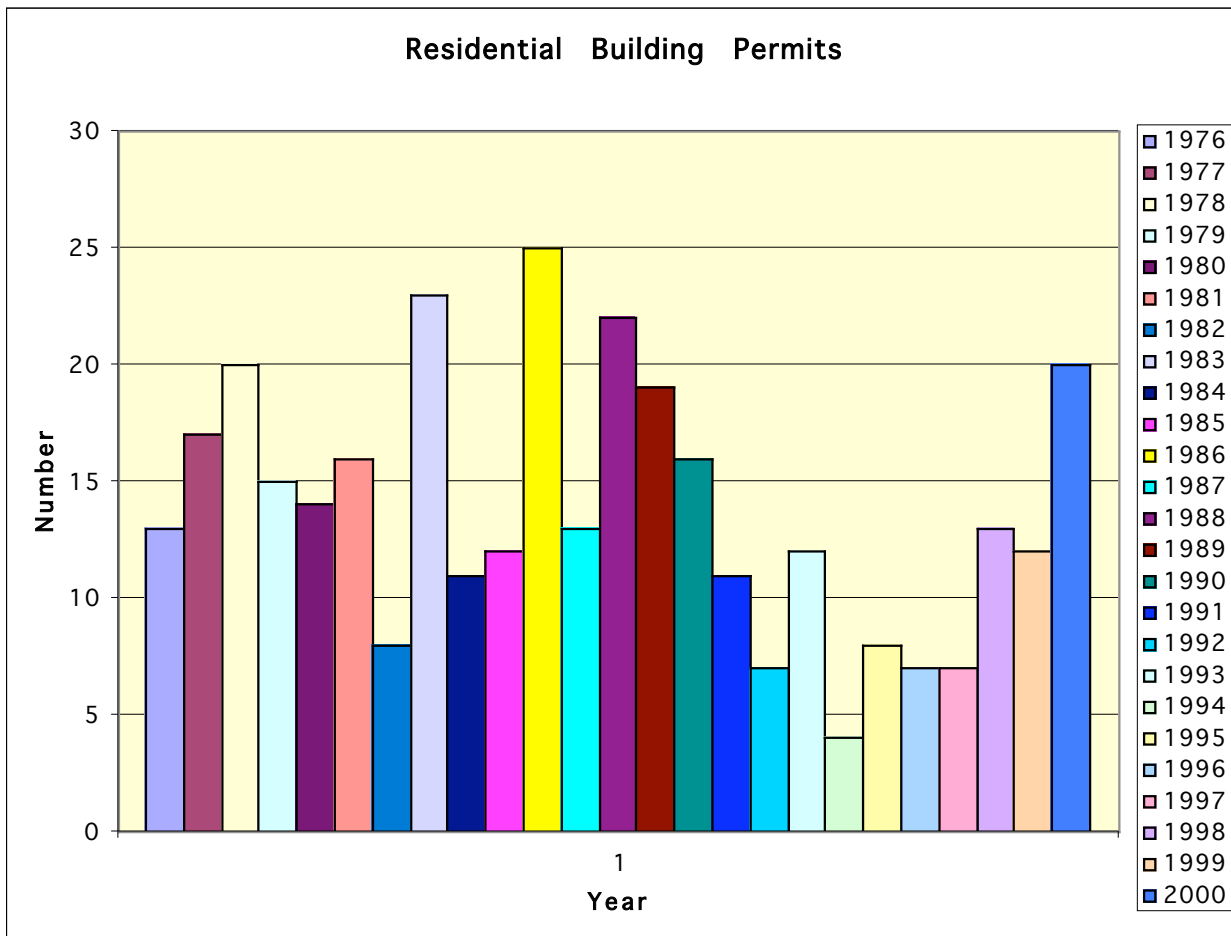
As noted in the preceding section, Plainfield residents find Plainfield to be a great place to live. There are a variety of settings in which residential development can occur. The Zoning Ordinance permits residential use in most areas of Plainfield. Each zoning district defines a different housing pattern, based on density or minimum lot size. There are five zoning districts and one overlay district. The districts are described in detail in the Zoning Ordinance, but range from Village Residential, where land is to be used as a residential center and should serve as a nucleus for

community activity, to the Wetland-Floodplain Overlay Zone, where no permanent residences are allowed.

Housing Stock

Recent residential development is tracked on the following graph, which shows the number of residential building permits issued between 1976 and 2000. While in the late seventies and early eighties the number of permits issued was relatively stable, peaks occurred in 1983, 1986 and 1988. In recent years typically 12 permits are issued per year.

FIGURE III-1-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS



The trends measured by building permits are reflected in the Census information collected decennially. As shown in Table 111-1, the increase in year-round units was very significant between 1970 and 1980, a 55% increase. Residential growth tapered off to 26.9% between 1980 and 1990. Between 1990 and 2000 the occupied housing units increased a more modest 9.8%.

The seasonal housing stock was cut in half in the 1980's most likely by conversion to year-round use. Interestingly, vacancies have increased almost threefold between 1980 and 1990 and appear to have stabilized at about 3%.

TABLE III-1-HOUSING UNITS OCCUPANCY

Number	1970	1980	1990	2000
Total Housing Units	392	614	792	877
Occupied Housing Units	391	606	769	844
% Change		55.0	26.9	9.8
Season Housing Units	25	30	15	19
Vacant Housing Units	1	8	23	33
Vacancy Rates %	.2	1.3	3.0	3.2

Source: U.S. Census Data

Housing Type

The profile of housing type in Plainfield has changed slightly over the past twenty years. Single-family residences have grown in popularity, representing 84.7% of the housing stock in Town. There were gains in the proportion of manufactured housing and a decrease in the proportion of multi-family units.

Table III-2-DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSING STOCK BY TYPE

Type of Unit	Plainfield			New Hampshire		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
Single Family	82.7%	85.6%	84.7%	67.3%	63.7%	66.8%
Multi-Family	10.9%	7.1%	6.6%	26.8%	28.0%	26.5%
Manufactured Housing	5.7%	6.1%	8.7%	6.0%	7.0%	6.5%
Other					1.0%	.1%

Age of Housing Stock

The 2000 Census data, show that 26.3% of the housing stock was built pre-1940, 10.3% between 1940 and 1960. Thus almost 2/3 of the housing stock has been built since 1960.

OCCUPANCY CHARACTERISTICS

As can be noted in the following table, Plainfield continues to house a higher proportion of owner occupants than renters compared with Sullivan County and the rest of the Region. Overall vacancy rate of owner occupied units is only 0.3% whereas 2.5% of Renter Occupied Units are vacant for an overall vacancy rate of 2.8% in 2000. This compares to overall vacancy Rate of 3.1% in 1990.

TABLE III-3- DISTRIBUTION (Owner/Rental) OF UNITS

	Total Occupied Units	Owner Occupied	%	Renter Occupied	%
Plainfield					
1980	606	481	79.3	125	20.7
1990	726	630	87	96	13.0
2000	844	729	86.4	115	13.6
Sullivan County					
2000	16530	11903	72.0	4727	28.0

Persons Per Household

The following table tracks the number of persons per household in 1980 and 1990.

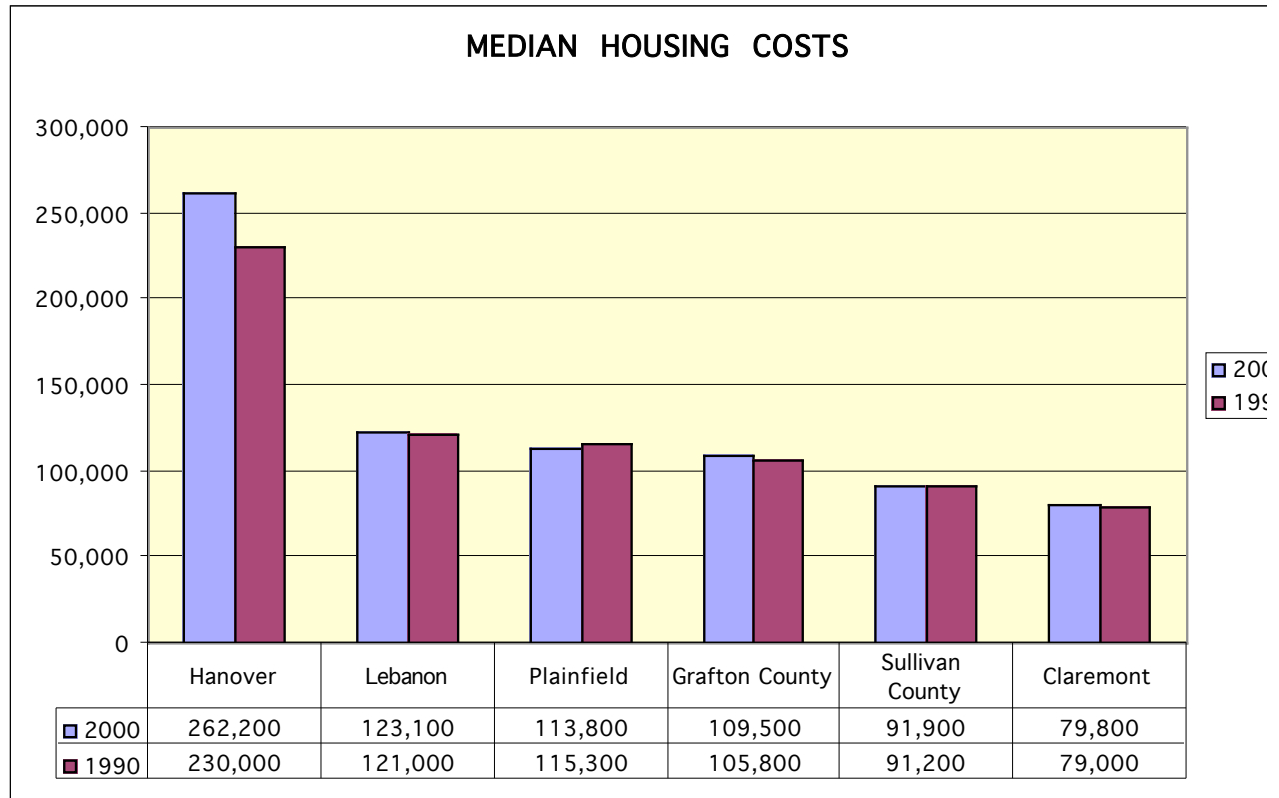
TABLE III-4-PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Year	Number of Households	Number of People	Persons per Household
1980	606	1749	2.89
1990	726	2056	2.83
2000	844	2241	2.98

Housing Costs

The following graphs compare the costs of the median value of a house and the median monthly rent in Plainfield with the comparable values in other towns in the UVLS Region. The median house cost in Plainfield (\$113,800), is slightly lower than the 1990 value of \$115,300. In contrast, the median monthly rent in Town (\$728), is 47.3% higher than it was in 1990 and ranks third highest after Norwich (\$866) and Hanover (\$857) in the Region.

FIGURE III-3-MEDIAN HOUSING COSTS



GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing Goals

1. Preserve the rural character of Plainfield, in general, as well as the village character of Plainfield and Meriden.
2. Preserve the historic and aesthetic qualities of Plainfield's built environment.
3. Create a climate in which available, affordable housing is possible.
4. Prevent development that jeopardizes the natural areas, health, safety or prosperity of the Town, or necessitates an excessive expenditure of public funds for supply of municipal services.

Housing Recommendations

1. Ensure that the Town's zoning ordinance allows for gradual additions to existing housing stock.

III - HOUSING

2. Ensure that the Town's zoning ordinance accommodates affordable housing.
3. Through zoning ordinance, encourage conversion of large houses to apartments.
4. Discourage inappropriate commercial and industrial intrusions into residential neighborhoods.
5. New multi-unit structures and developments should be located close to existing public services/village centers.

IV. ECONOMIC BASE

INTRODUCTION

At the core of any Master Plan is the belief that quality of life in a community requires a careful balancing of social and economic concerns. The ‘quality of place’ has become a major source of attractiveness for employees in a knowledge-based economy. To address the social concerns of the community surveys were conducted in 1987 and 1993 on community attitudes. The 1997 Master Plan was guided by these concerns and a number of significant changes in the Plainfield by-laws have been made as a result of this consultation process.

One may usefully catalogue the community priorities, which have guided the Master Plan as follows as follows:

- Preservation of the rural identity
- Social needs
- Livability of the community
- Sustainability
- Transportation infrastructure
- Housing
- Social capital

The Town of Plainfield is predominantly a rural residential community, with a few commercial and industrial firms. Most of the existing businesses are small, home-based businesses and a number of residents are self-employed. The concentrations of commercial activity are in the villages of Meriden and Plainfield and along the State highways.

Plainfield’s economic base is closely tied to the regional economy. The majority of residents’ work and shop in the larger neighboring communities, particularly Hanover and Lebanon.

The environment, our natural resources and the small-town character of the Town are important to the economy of the community. Clean air, clean rivers and streams, forests, agricultural fields, and scenic views, as well as the rural, small-town quality of life, attract residents, tourists and businesses.

Data used in this chapter came from several sources, including the previous Plainfield Master Plan, the U.S. Census, the New Hampshire Department of Employment Security, and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission.

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

The following is a brief summary of the results of the 1984 and 1993 town-wide surveys, which relate directly to economic development. A comparison of the results suggests that there was little change in the attitudes of Plainfield residents between surveys. In cases where the percentage of respondents are indicated, the most recent survey result is the number shown, otherwise it is the number which is shown first, followed by the result from the 1984 survey:

- A majority continues to want Plainfield to remain a rural/agricultural (51.1 %) or commuter/bedroom (18.8%) community. Even fewer (14.3% vs. 22.8%) now want Plainfield to become a light industrially-based town. Almost no respondents (1.5% and 1.1 %) have wanted to see Plainfield become commercially-based.

IV. ECONOMIC BASE

- A modest plurality (Yes [40.9%], No [32.5%], and Uncertain [26.6%]), want to see more commercial growth in Plainfield.
- The most favored types of future economic development continue to be: small, home-based businesses (92.2% and 87.9%); farms (70.0% and 92.2%); professional offices (43.4% and 62.5 %); and restaurants (43.2% and 51.4%).
- The least favored forms of economic development continue to be: heavy industry (90.1 %) and industrial parks (76.8% and 82%); shopping centers (83.3% and 88%); motels (56.6% and 78%); and office parks (46% and 63 %).
- A plurality (45.2%) continue to prefer additional commercial development to occur within or adjacent to village centers, while others (14.1 %) indicated their preference for development along Routes 12A and 120. A small number (9.9%) preferred it to be scattered throughout Town, or concentrated in commercial shopping center(s) outside village centers (5.6%).
- There was support (Yes [57.3%], No [41.3%]) for the establishment of commercial zones in Plainfield. Responses indicate that residents are most comfortable with additional commercial development along Routes 12A and 120, and within or adjacent to existing village centers.
- Respondents continue to feel that Plainfield is a desirable place to live because of the following: uncrowded and quiet conditions (88.2%), scenic quality (74.1%), friendly people (60.6%), outdoor recreation (38.2%), and good schools (37.1%).
- In 1998 the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance was modified to restrict commercial development to properties within 500 feet of a state highway. In addition, to encourage re-use of existing buildings and to promote the consolidation of essential services within the VR zone, an additional use, ‘**Approved Combination of Related Uses**’ was introduced. Also at this time another use was also introduced ‘**Approved Business Project**’ to allow’ for grouping of businesses within the VR zone.

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

Income levels in Plainfield are higher compared to Sullivan County, Grafton County and the State. As Chart IV-1 shows, between 1979 and 1999 median family income in Plainfield rose faster than those for either Sullivan or Grafton Counties, as well as the State as a whole. The 1999 median family income of \$61205 now exceeds that of all the aforementioned groups.

CHART IV-1 MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME

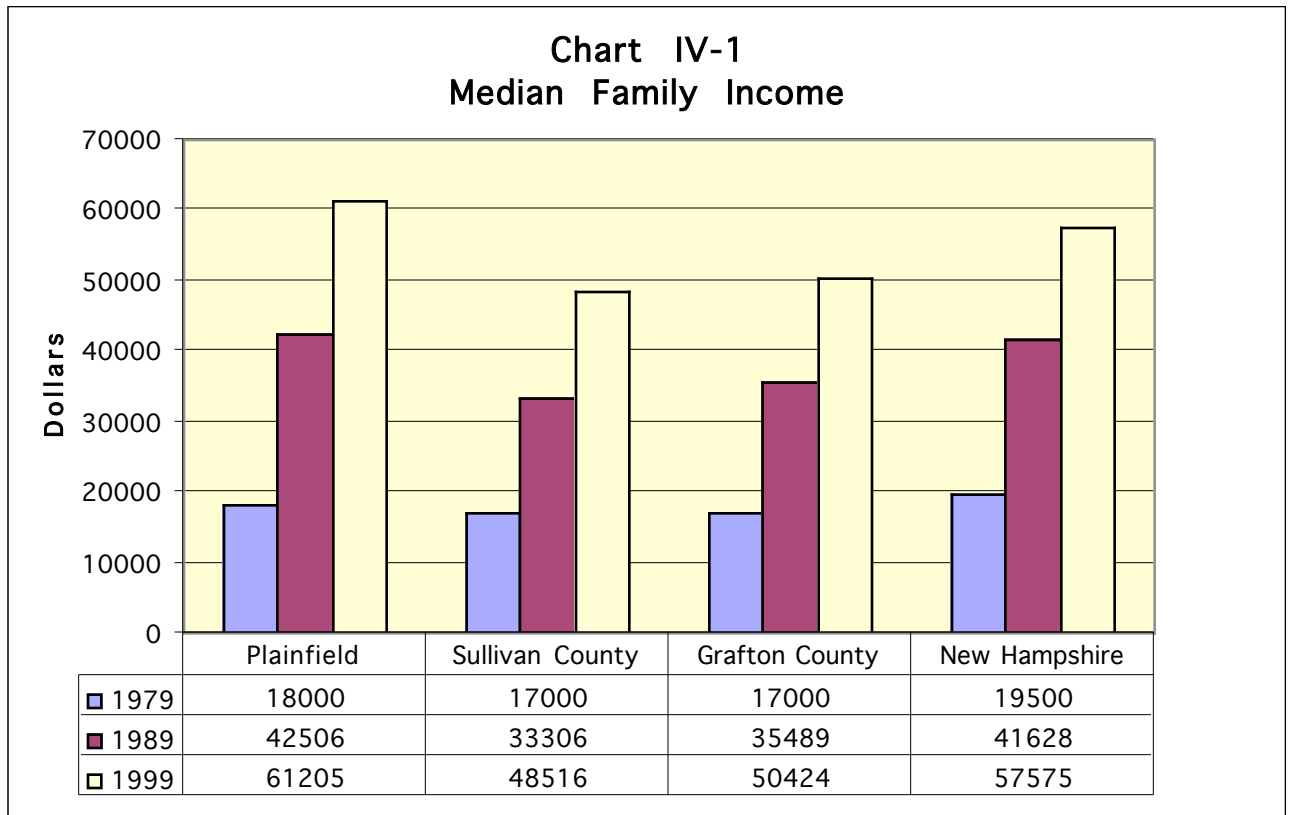
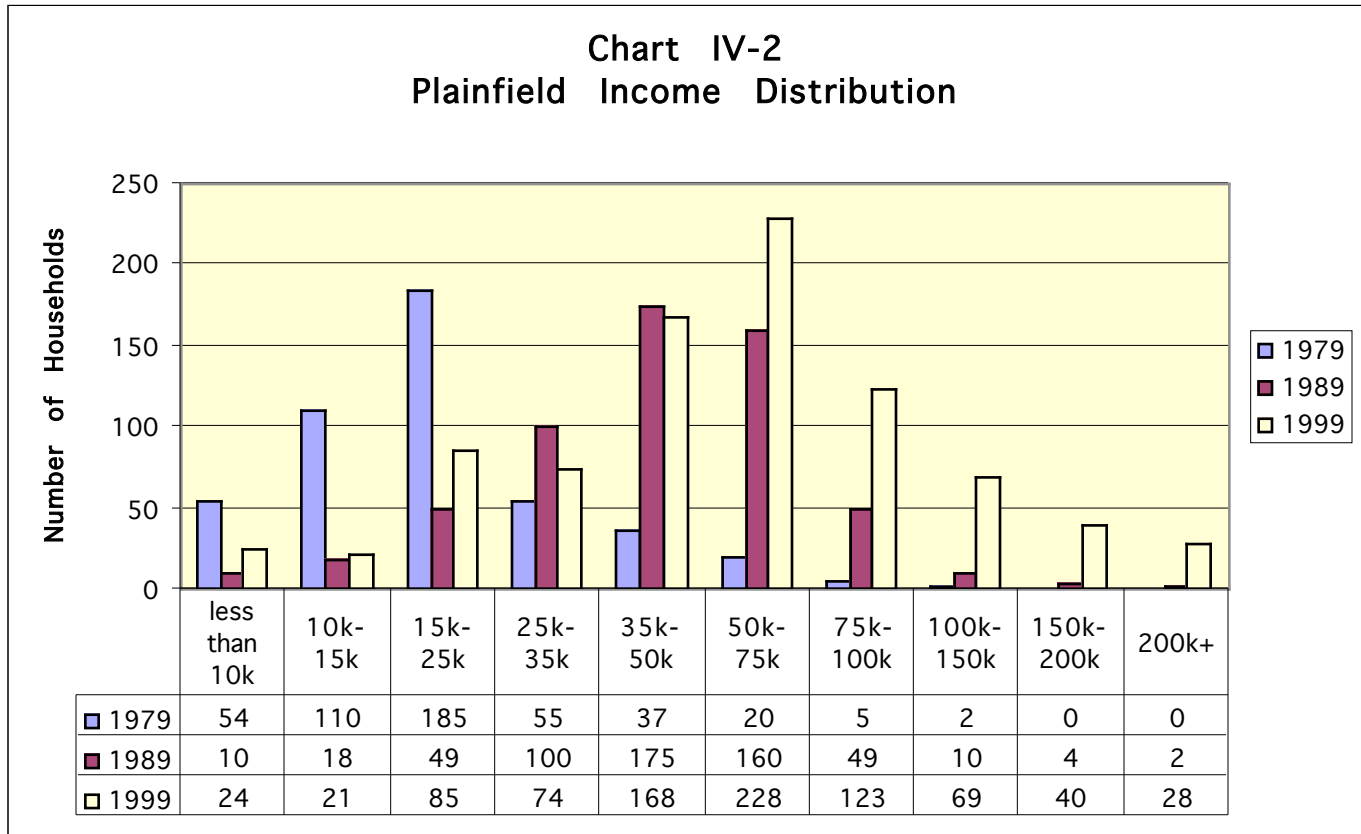


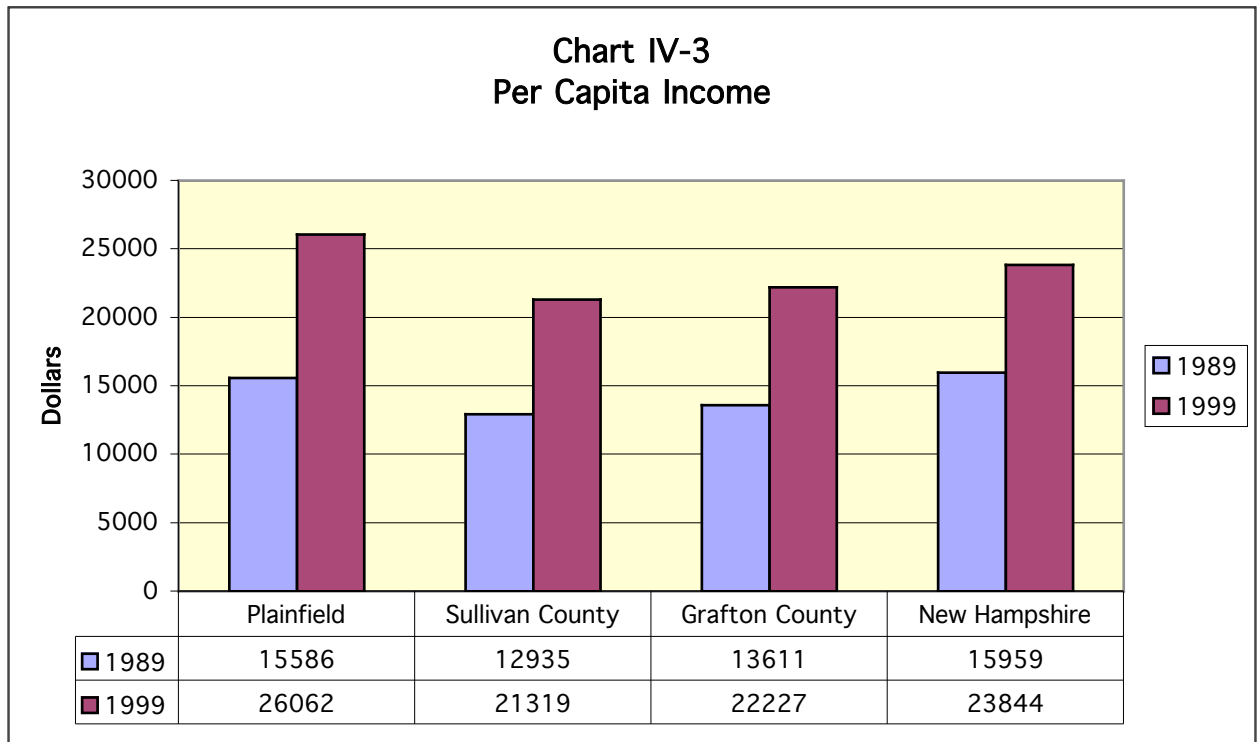
Chart IV-2, shown below, illustrates the distribution of household income within Plainfield in 1979, 1989 and 1999. The number of household units receiving different levels of income is shown. In addition to the shift to the right that one would expect due to inflation, there is a substantial re-centering of the distribution in the middle income range indicating that a higher percentage of households had income levels in the middle of the range in 1999 than in 1989. The total number of households with income of less than \$25,000 increased from 77 to 130. Households with incomes in excess of \$150,000 increased dramatically from 6 to 68.

CHART IV-2 INCOME DISTRIBUTION



Per capita income as shown on Chart IV-3, at \$26062 has grown dramatically in the last decennial and exceeds that of Sullivan County, Grafton County as well as that of the State.

CHART IV-3-PER CAPITA INCOME



POVERTY LEVEL

Following the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive 14, the U.S. Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is poor. If a family's total income is less than that family's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it, is considered poor. The poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index (CPI-U). The official poverty definition counts money income before taxes and does not include capital gains and non-cash benefits (such as public housing, Medicaid, and food stamps). Poverty is not defined for people in military barracks, institutional group quarters, or for unrelated individuals under age 15 (such as foster children). They are excluded from the poverty universe--that is, they are considered neither as "poor" nor as "non-poor." Local level data are published only every ten years.

TABLE IV-4 POVERTY THRESHOLDS - 2000

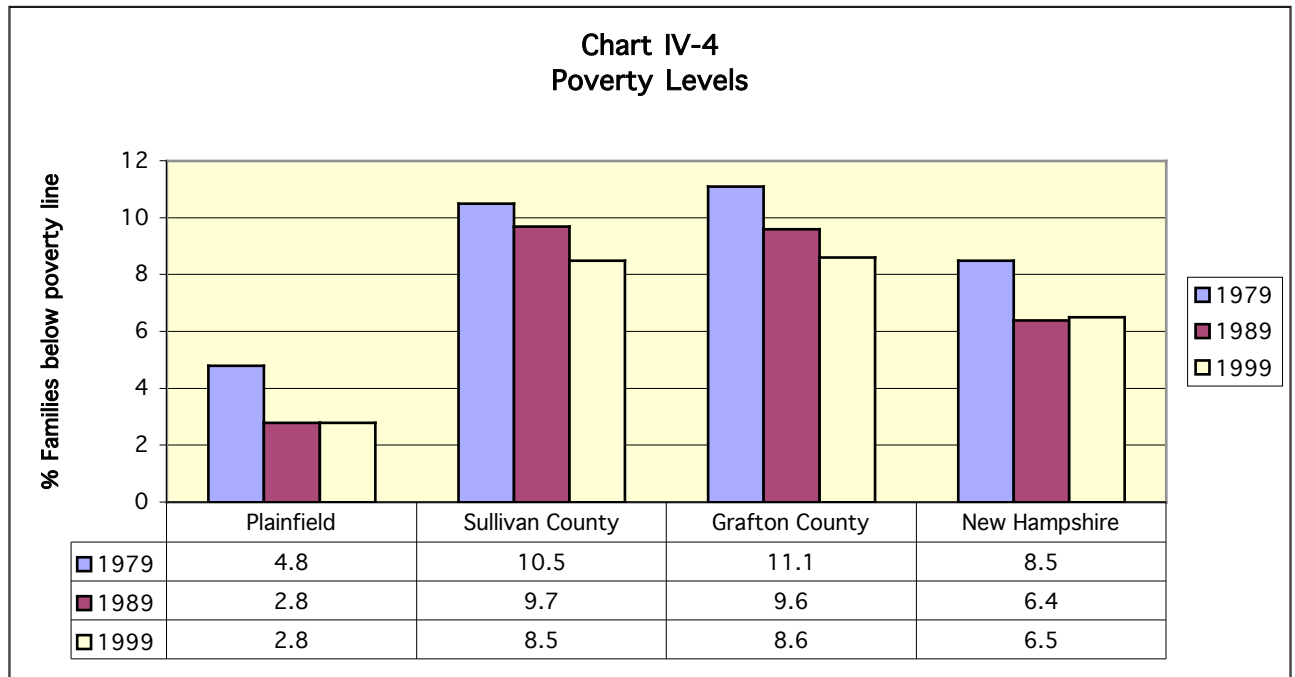
**Poverty Thresholds in 2000,
By Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years
(Dollars)**

<u>Size of family unit</u>	<u>Weighted average thresholds</u>
	<i>One person (unrelated individual)</i>
	<i>Under 65 years</i>
	<i>65 years and over</i>
Two persons	11,239
Householder under 65 years	11,590
Householder 65 years and over	10,419
Three persons	13,738
Four persons	17,603
Five persons	20,819
Six persons	23,528
Seven persons	26,754
Eight persons	29,701
Nine persons or more	35,060

Source: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey

Chart IV-4 shows a comparison of the percentages of the population below the poverty line for Plainfield, Sullivan and Grafton Counties, and the State, for 1979, 1989 and 1999. While all the groups showed a reduction in poverty over the two decades, except the State which shows a marginal increase over the last decade. Plainfield continues to have a significantly smaller percentage of families living below the poverty line than either county, or the State.

CHART IV-4 FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LINE



As Table IV-5 illustrates, the elderly in Plainfield are not as fortunate as those in the under 65-age group. The number and percentage of persons over 65 living below the poverty line has decreased during the period 1989 to 1999, and is below that of the two counties and the State as a whole. On the other hand, the percentage of those over 65 and below the poverty line is almost twice that of those under 65 in Plainfield.

TABLE IV- 5- POVERTY BY AGE GROUP

	1989				1999			
	Under 65 below PL		Over 65 below PL		Under 65 below PL		Over 65 below PL	
	Number	% Age Group	Number	% Age Group	Number	% Age Group	Number	% Age Group
Plainfield	40	2.1	20	11.2	52	2.6	11	4.8
Sullivan County	3032	9.3	683	12.3	2830	6	537	8.4
Grafton County	5476	5	1161	12.6	5703	8.1	759	6.9
New Hampshire	57204	6	11900	10.2	69538	6.3	9992	6.7

EMPLOYMENT

Table IV-6/7 provides a view of Plainfield residents' employment status and grouping by occupational categories. Plainfield has a higher percentage of people (65.3%) with managerial/professional (white collar) jobs, than Sullivan County (51.9%), Grafton County (60.2%), or the State (62.4%). It is also interesting to note how small a percentage of the population remains employed in farming, forestry and fishing in Plainfield (1.0%) and the State (0.4%).

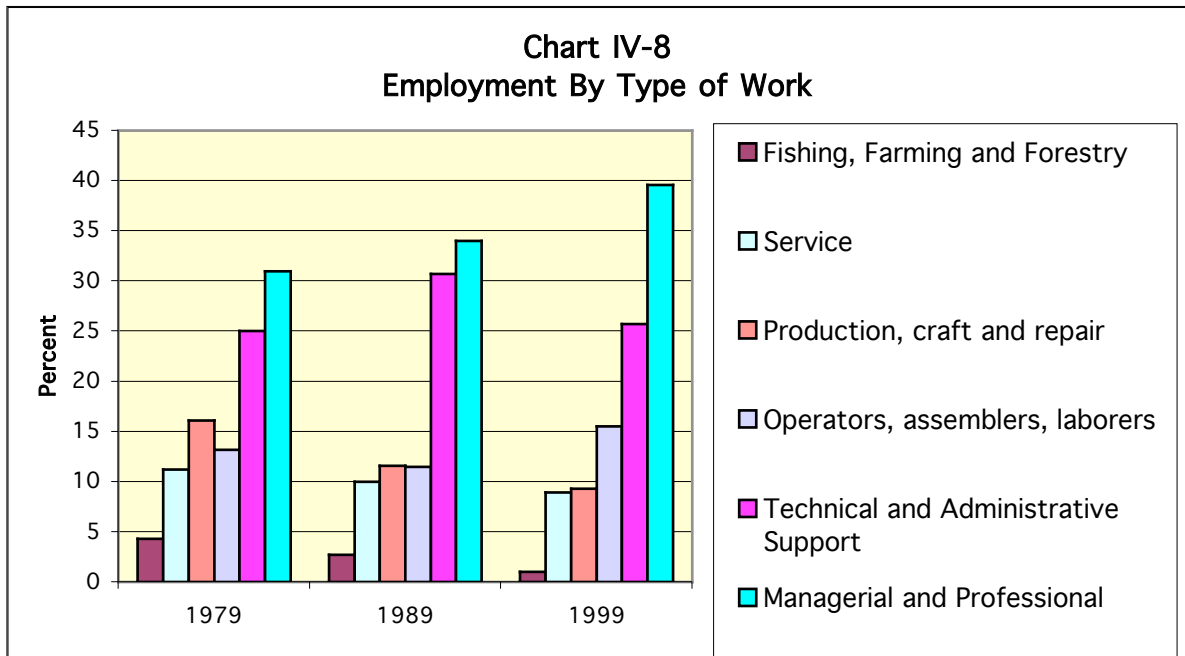
TABLE IV – 6- EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Employment Status		
	Number	Percent
Population 16 and over	1741	100
In labor force	1329	76.3
Civilian force	1327	76.2
Employed	1306	75.0
Unemployed	21	1.2
Armed Forces	2	0.1
Not in labor force	412	23.7

TABLE IV- 7 OCCUPATIONS

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION				
	1989		1999	
Employed persons 16 and over	1168	100%	1306	100%
Management and Professional	395	33.8%	517	39.6%
Sales and Admin Support	352	30.1%	336	25.9%
Production and Transportation	137	11.7%	121	9.3%
Construction and Maintenance	133	11.4%	203	15.5%
Service	120	10.3%	116	8.9%
Farm, Fishery, Forest	31	2.7%	13	1.0%

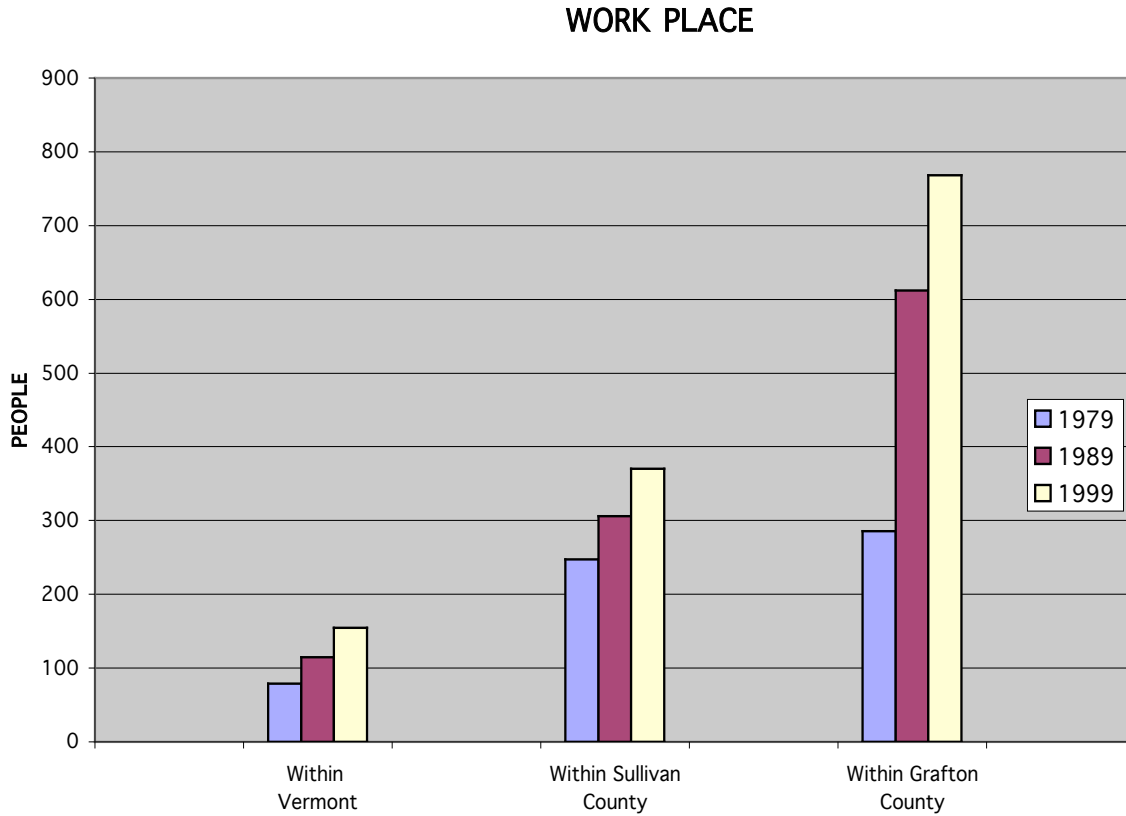
CHART IV-8-EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF WORK



EMPLOYMENT

Table IV-8 provides a view of Plainfield residents' employment, grouping jobs by occupational categories. Plainfield's profile reflects that of Grafton County more closely than that of Sullivan County. Compared to the State as a whole, Plainfield has a higher percentage of people (65.3%) with managerial/professional specialty jobs, than Sullivan County (51.9%), Grafton County (60.2%) and the State (62.4%). It is also interesting to note how small a percentage of the population is employed in farming, forestry and fishing, 1.0% in Plainfield and 0.4 % in the State.

CHART IV-9-WORK PLACE LOCATION



REGIONAL ECONOMIC TRENDS

Over 77% of Plainfield's resident workers travel to other communities for employment (see Chart IV-9), indicating the importance of examining trends and characteristics of the regional economy and how these impact on Plainfield. Current structures to address issues of a regional nature are inadequate.

Much must be done to encourage constructive citizen participation and new governance structures able to respond to regional challenges. Dialogue must be opened on a few broad issues with local impact such as taxes, transportation, land use planning etc.

PROPERTY TAX BASE/RATES

The per capita wealth, the amount of taxable property value, or tax base, per resident, in 2000, was \$45,267 as compared to \$37,652 for Claremont and \$73,576 for Hanover and \$85,006 for Lebanon. The Plainfield tax base has grown at 1.99% per annum over the past five years.

The Town of Plainfield has a relatively high property tax rate. The rate is of course directly impacted by the size of the tax base and the spending rates. The 2000 full value tax rate of \$31.00 was exceeded only by Claremont within Sullivan and was in the top decile of rates Statewide. Two factors drive this up; the County Tax Rate is the highest in the State and the Local School Tax Rate is within the top decile of all such rates within the State. The Municipal portion of the tax rate ranks at 121 out of 232 towns in the State.

New local economic development does, of course, contribute to a community's local property tax base. It can, in a few cases, relieve the property tax burden placed on individual homeowners. It would be naive, however, to assume that extensive new commercial or industrial development would reduce the local property tax burden. The influx of new businesses brings concurrent new residential development, which, in turn, places additional pressure on community facilities and services such as schools and highway, police and fire departments. It can also drive up the price of housing, which is counter-productive to the Town's goal of encouraging affordable housing. Notwithstanding this, Plainfield is not immune to development in adjacent towns and the overall housing shortage in the area. Large lot requirements, high land prices and the gradual saturation of the towns of Hanover / Etna is driving high-end development in Plainfield.

It is, therefore, important to critically examine both the costs and benefits of new commercial or industrial development and to project the potential secondary impacts of new development before encouraging business growth in Plainfield.

The key to a strong municipal tax base in New Hampshire is well planned, balanced and well timed growth. A sound capital budgeting program can also help maintain the fiscal health of a community, since it projects major capital outlays and provides for stable, long-term financing arrangements.

ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

The Town of Plainfield has limited potential for both commercial and light industrial development, and is not likely to become a major economic center. Limitations for economic development include low population density, remote location, distance to markets, lack of rail service, lack of public water and sewer, topography and other natural limitations, and small labor supply.

Plainfield does, however, have the potential for certain types of commercial and light industrial development. The first type is based on local population growth, which increases the demand for locally-oriented service, trade and construction firms, convenience stores, drug stores, hairdressers, carpenters, etc.

The second type of economic potential for Plainfield is business, which caters to the affluent seasonal visitors, or can draw customers from a large area, extending beyond the typical market, Home Hill and Singing Hills are examples of this type of business. To attract these customers to Plainfield, there must be something special about the business, based on either quality or uniqueness. Businesses in this category include quality restaurants and specialty shops and services.

The third type of economic potential is the home-based business, which already is an important form of local economic activity. As communication systems and information technology improve, businesses can locate in more rural, remote areas and work can take place within the home.

The final form of potential economic growth is light industrial development and wholesale businesses. Unlike years ago, when many industries were large, noisy and polluting, there are many small, clean, light industries today, which could become assets to the Town. Examples of clean, light industry include small electronics, computer, stitching, research and testing, and machine shop companies. Wholesale and mail-order companies also can be clean, quiet and attractive. With proper land use controls, such as zoning, subdivision regulations and site plan review, the Town can encourage this type of economic development and still protect the public interest.

GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important to realize that Plainfield's economy is closely tied to the development of the Upper Valley and also to its natural resources and its rural small-town character.

The intent of the following recommendations is to strengthen and protect Plainfield's economic standing. The farms, forests, rivers, brooks and ponds, scenic views, historical character and rural small-town qualities are major economic assets, which attract businesses, residents and visitors. It is possible to allow limited economic growth in appropriate locations while, at the same time, protecting and enhancing Plainfield's assets through sound land use planning, site and building design, and the adoption and enforcement of local land use regulations, which are designed to protect the public interest. This will allow Plainfield residents to enjoy the benefits of economic growth without destroying the quality of life.

GOAL

Plan for growth and renewal, while maintaining the rural agricultural character of Plainfield and protecting its natural resources and open spaces.

RECOMMENDATIONS 1997

- Identify and delineate an appropriate zone or zones to accommodate more intensive commercial use close to existing village centers and served by State roads.

Status June 2002: implemented in 1998

- Develop a Zoning Ordinance to allow for "clustering" of compatible commercial uses to reduce traffic and minimize "sprawl".

Status June 2002: implemented in 1998

- Develop land use controls to reduce the negative impacts of commercial and industrial development and discourage shopping centers, motels and fast food restaurants, while allowing for essential services and providing an opportunity for controlled growth.

Status June 2002: Design Guidelines issued 1998

- Consider development of waiver procedure to encourage utilization of historic buildings for non-residential use.

Status June 2002: not acted on

RECOMMENDATIONS 2002 UPDATE

1. Quality of life should be recognized as key to economic growth. Quality of life depends on an improving physical infrastructure and the shape the village/town/regional environment. A community profile and survey should be undertaken to re-establish the basic desires of the community and to secure, from the participation process, a sense of what the priorities of the stakeholders are when it comes to growth strategies. The following are areas to be researched.
 - a. Those focusing on the demands of citizens
 - b. Preservation of the rural identity
 - c. Social needs: concerns of citizens about poverty, youth crime and safety, and the need to accommodate the growing social diversity through inclusive institutions
 - d. Livability
 - e. Sustainability
 - f. Those focusing on issues of a regional nature
 - g. Transportation infrastructure
 - h. Urban form: urban/suburban/village environment
 - i. Housing
 - j. Social capital
 - k. Governance, taxes and regional trade-offs
2. That efforts be made to educate the community about the value of the arts, culture and heritage as basic assets of the town, and to encourage civic entrepreneurs to contribute to the development of social and relational capital

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

INTRODUCTION

The extent and adequacy of community facilities, services and utilities, whether publicly or privately operated, are dependent on residents' demand for or acceptance of the level of services provided. As the Town population grows, lifestyles change, and new types of development come to Town, the level and types of services provided will evolve to meet these future needs.

To plan for the community facilities and services, that will be needed in the future, it is first necessary to determine the extent of existing facilities, services and utilities. These existing facilities are listed in an appendix to this Chapter. This Chapter concerns itself primarily with the municipally-owned physical facilities and operating programs. Some non-municipally-owned services are also accounted for. In order to meet future needs, the suitability of the existing facilities, services and utilities must be accounted for, with consideration given to funding mechanisms, the ability of the Town to physically accommodate the use, and its impact on abutters. For each facility or service, information is provided regarding its adequacy for the next five to ten years. Reference is also made to the 1993 Community Attitude Survey included in Appendix I at the end of this Plan. Goals and recommendations are summarized at the end of the Chapter. Facilities and services in Town are shown on the following map.

In Plainfield, there are two distinct village areas to be served. In order to reinforce and preserve these villages, both must still retain residential, commercial and community service functions. Duplication of services does occur. However, over the years, where it has made sense, there has been consolidation of facilities and services, such as schools, town offices and police. Other community services found in both villages, such as water systems, should continue to exist independently. Whenever possible, when services exist in both villages, as do the libraries, there needs to be a high level of cooperation to minimize the duplication of services. As opportunities arise, consolidation and cooperation should be encouraged.

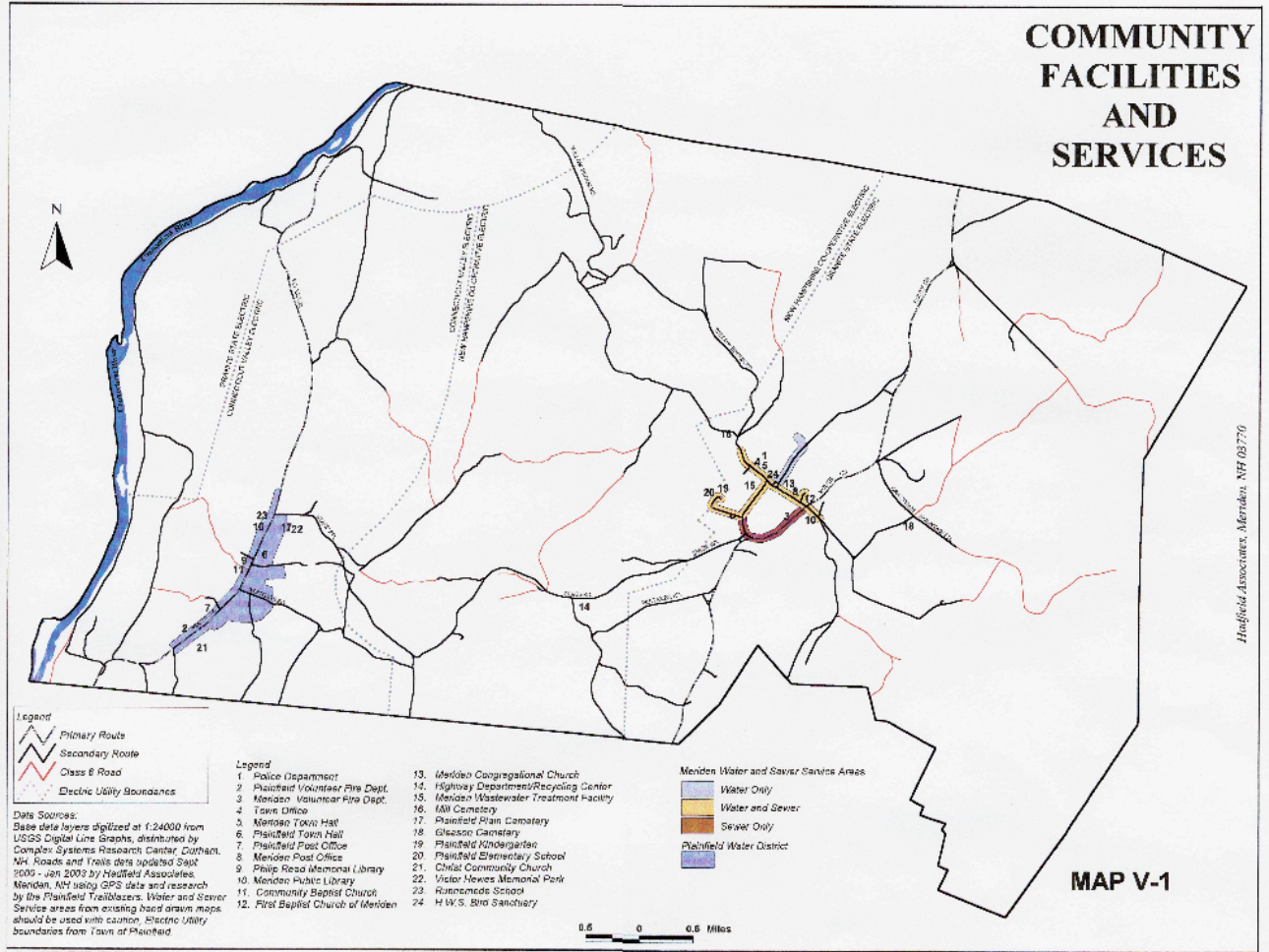
PLAINFIELD'S COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The Meriden and Plainfield Volunteer Fire Departments participate in mutual aid with Cornish, Windsor, Claremont, Lebanon, Hartford and Hanover. They are both nonprofit organizations, which are financed by fund raising activities, as well as Town appropriations. MAP V-1

Survey respondents gave the Fire Departments high ratings, as 75 of the respondents rated their service as "good". The Plainfield Fire Department purchased land and built a new firehouse in 2000-2001. The new firehouse is 60 by 84 feet. It has three bays, an office and a meeting room. The new site is located one mile south of Plainfield village at #1260 Route 12A. The Meriden Fire Department has no expansion options at its current site.

MAP V-1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES



POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Police Department consists of two full-time, one half time and a number of part-time employees. Situated in the new headquarters in the Meriden Town Hall, the Department's facility needs have been addressed for the present. A mutual aid agreement continues with Cornish and Lebanon.

The Police Departments service rated the highest of all Town services on the 1993 survey, with 86% of the respondents giving the police protection a "good" rating. Between 1983 and 1993, there has been a transformation of opinion about the Department, and now the Department has the full support of the community; this compares with the 40% of respondents to the 1983 Survey who felt the same way, this is a drastic improvement in perception of service.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE, AMBULANCE AND DISPATCHING

Dialing 911 accesses all requests for emergency services. Plainfield adopted the Street Numbering Ordinance on June 7, 1995, in conjunction with the N.H. Statewide Enhanced 911, which began operations on July 1, 1995.

The Cornish Rescue Squad, and ambulances provide emergency medical care to Plainfield residents from Windsor, Vermont and Lebanon, New Hampshire.

The Cornish Rescue Squad is made up of Plainfield and Cornish residents who provide first response emergency medical care for the sick and injured, and first aid coverage at structure fires. They do not provide transportation to hospitals. They are dispatched through Windsor. The vehicle and equipment, other than what rescue squad members personally carry, are housed in Cornish. The Town of Plainfield appropriates money each year for this service.

The Windsor Ambulance Service responds to calls from Plainfield Village and the southwestern portion of Town. This ambulance is dispatched through the Windsor dispatch service. User fees and annual appropriations from the Town fund both the dispatch and ambulance.

An ambulance service is dispatched by the City of Lebanon and covers the northern portion of Plainfield and Meriden Village. As a cost saving move in 2001, the town unified dispatch services with the town of Hanover. User fees and Town appropriations pay for both the ambulance and dispatch services.

The Victor Hewes Memorial Field, on Stage Road on the west side of Town, is the designated landing area for the Dartmouth-Hitchcock emergency helicopter.

Survey results indicate that respondents were very satisfied with the Rescue Squad, with 71% giving the Squad a "good" rating. The ambulance service received a lower rating, with only 48% selecting a "good" rating; however, a full 37% were uncertain about how to rate the ambulance service. More respondents were uncertain how to rate the ambulance service (37%) than the rescue squad (23%)

TOWN HALLS

There are two town halls, one in each village. Action taken at the annual Town Meeting in March of 1995 re-emphasized the 1993 survey results, which indicated that there was strong support for both town halls to be preserved for their historic value.

Voters approved appropriations to repair and restore the Plainfield Town Hall. A full schedule of repairs and restorative work has been completed in 1998. Private fund raising by a Historical Society committee is now underway for construction of a working kitchen. It is hoped that the Town Hall will be utilized for both public and private functions to justify its preservation and maintenance. It is the only town owned building large enough for a gathering of over forty people in the Plainfield Village. Due to its small lot size and the close proximity of abutters, parking is a concern about its future use. There is handicapped parking available on-site, but most of the other parking is on Route 12A. A nearby municipally-owned parking lot could alleviate that problem in the future.

The voters addressed the underutilization of the Meriden Town Hall by appropriating funds for it to be converted to the Town and Police Offices. Construction of these new offices was begun in 1995 and completed in 1995. The Meriden Town Hall became Plainfield's municipal building at that time.

TOWN OFFICES

The Town Office is located in the municipal building (former Meriden Town Hall) at 110 Main Street in Meriden Village. The Selectmen's office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 p.m. The Town Administrator and Selectmen's secretary work out of the Selectmen's office and are available full-time during the week. The town offices offer expanded services with one full time clerk. Vehicle registration is available 4 days and 1 night per week. The Tax Collector, Treasurer and Building Inspector all utilize the municipal building and are accessible to the public through part-time office hours during the week. The services of building inspector are contracted out to The American Inspector Services.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Highway Department's garage is located on Stage Road. The site and its structures, the garage, a salt shed and equipment shed, are thought to be adequate for the daily operations of the Department for the next ten years. There are two drawbacks to the Stage Road site: distance to the Town gravel pit and limited room for expansion. Two small lots were added to the garage holdings. The town purchased 1.3 acres, fronting on Penniman Road in March 1999. It also purchased 3/4 of an acre including a well, which was formerly under an easement. It will be used to accommodate equipment storage.

GRAVEL EXCAVATION

Sand and gravel resources are important for highway maintenance and construction purposes. The Town owns its own gravel pit on Ferry Hill Road and from this pit removes approximately 9,100 yards of sand and gravel per year for municipal operations. Bohn & Associates of Wilder, VT conducted a gravel pit inventory in May 1997. The inventory indicated an excess of 70,000 cubic yards of gravel (30 years supply) in the pit on Ferry Hill Road. The inventory also revealed 1620,000

cubic yards of coarse sand (10 years supply) and an adequate supply of mixing sand to extend the gravel. A new source of sand will be needed in ten years.

SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL

Plainfield is one of the few Upper Valley towns with a municipally-sponsored curbside collection. At present, the Town contracts with a waste hauler that picks up household solid waste at curbside every other week. This 20-year contract will expire in 2007. Planning needs to be done to determine what the town will do at that time. The garbage is disposed of at the incinerator in Claremont. The incinerator is run by the Sullivan County Regional Disposal District, with which the Town has a 20-year contract. Users' fees and Town appropriations meet disposal costs. Nearly 80% of the respondents to the 1993 Survey felt that waste collection service was "good".

On alternate weeks, the waste hauler picks up recyclables - glass, soda bottles (PET 1), HDPE 2 plastic detergent type bottles, newspapers, and metal and aluminum cans. In addition, the recycling shed at the Town garage is a collection point for junk mail, assorted cardboard, batteries, cloth and used clothes, metals and office paper. Seventy-two percent of respondents have rated recycling opportunities as good. Once the Town went to users' fees, the recycling figures increased a great deal. The Town should continue to promote recycling and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes at regular household hazardous waste collections.

Pursuant to RSA 149:M-13, a town must provide access to a facility that can accommodate septage. Presently, most residences have their own septic systems. Private haulers take septage to the Lebanon Wastewater treatment Plant.

LIBRARIES

The Town of Plainfield has two public libraries: one located in Plainfield Village and one in Meriden Village. Both are presently funded by a combination of Town appropriations, trust funds, fund raising and gifts. The two public libraries cooperate to avoid duplication of materials, services and hours. Both libraries are part of the Statewide Library Development System, which means they must meet the standards set by the State Library Commission for a town of Plainfield's size. The required standards for each level of library use are set according to a town's population. As the town's population increases, so do the requirements that have to be met.

The Philip Read Memorial Library in Plainfield Village was built in 1921 and housed a donated collection of 1,200 books at that time. Over the past 75 years, the collection has expanded to over 17,000 new books and many new services have been added. The changing times and the changing make-up of the community are creating an ever-increasing demand for services. Between 1974 and 1990, circulation increased 560 percent. During this time, the only changes that have been made to the building were:

- In 1971, half the basement was remodeled into a meeting room.
- In 1974, a bathroom and small children's room were added onto the back of the building; and
- In 1989, a portion of the remaining basement was remodeled into a junior room.

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

The Philip Read Memorial Library has exhausted the space in the existing facility and is currently expanding the building. The Library Expansion Committee has raised funds, had plans drawn and purchased adjacent land to this end. In March 2001, they asked for money to support their plans at town meeting. The vote was 125 yes and 178 no (202 votes being required to pass). Most townspeople supported the need for expansion, but not on the scale as proposed. The selectmen were directed to appoint a committee to study current library facilities and services. The Committee reported to the Select Board in February 2002 and in March 2002 the Town meeting approved an expansion plan. Construction on the extension began in December 2002.

The current Meriden Library building in Meriden Village was built in 1965. In addition to the library function, the building provides meeting space for many local groups and organizations. The building received a new roof in 1993 and is structurally very sound. In 1995, interior renovations were completed to increase the available shelf space within the existing building. Patron parking is inadequate and should be improved. When needed, the existing lot and building are well suited to accommodate a library addition.

The majority of 1993 survey respondents (71%) gave the libraries a "good" rating in terms of service. Eighteen percent felt that the service was "fair". Respondents thought that the Philip Read Library was generally adequate (52%), compared to 28% who felt the facility needed to be renovated or replaced. The surveys indicate that 62% felt that the Meriden Library was adequate. Eleven percent thought that renovation or replacement was needed.

It is recommended that the Town continue to support the two libraries, as each is unique in its service to its own village patrons and each offers something different to the Town.

SCHOOLS

Plainfield Elementary School

Most children in grades K--8 attend the Plainfield Elementary School. In 1999 Plainfield became a stand alone 'school administrative unit' SAU31. The Plainfield School District operates the Elementary School and under an AREA agreement, sends high school students to Lebanon High School.

A committee has studied the feasibility of establishing a junior and high school jointly with Cornish. It is unlikely that this project would be undertaken in the next five years. There is room for expansion at the Plainfield Elementary School site, due to its level topography.

An addition to meet the above needs was completed in 2001. The three new rooms now house kindergarten, music, a kitchen, a computer area and offices.

Kimball Union Academy

Kimball Union Academy, a secondary boarding school, is located in Meriden Village. KUA has been generous in allowing Plainfield elementary students to use the skating rink and swimming pool. Also, advanced elementary students have been able to take advantage of some of KUA's math and language classes.

Runnemed School

Runnemed School is an independent school approved by the State of New Hampshire for grades K-12. Its strong academics, co-curricular theatre and arts programs and small size distinguish it. The school is located on what has been known as the Jenney property and is in the process (Feb 2003) of constructing a school building to handle some 120 students. In its initial year of operation in Plainfield it has been housed in six temporary, portable buildings.

CHURCHES

The 1993 Community Attitude Survey indicates that the churches are a special part of Plainfield for their historical aesthetic and cultural appeal. They are also an important part of the social fabric of the Town.

Church facilities provide meeting space for many Plainfield community-oriented groups. Three churches in Town faces a parking problem. The parking problem is best addressed in an overall parking study done for both villages. For the churches, because their facilities are used primarily during non-business hours, an efficient parking solution would be to coordinate with businesses not in operation during the evening or on Sundays. On-street parking may be a preferred solution for the churches, since the facility use is sporadic and during non-business hours. Creation of a large expanse of parking area for the exclusive use of each church is not recommended as a preferred use of the scarce village land. Instead, a multi-purpose, efficiently designed and carefully located parking area would be more suitable to Plainfield's villages.

In July 1999, The Christ Community Church purchased the former snathe factory plus 70 acres from the estate of Sid Hammond and subsequently erected a 12,000 square foot church. As part of the Planning Board site review, the church offered the use of its facilities as an emergency shelter for the town. It can house 300 people with kitchen/dining facilities and has its own generator.

CEMETERIES

In addition to an unknown number of private burial grounds, there are fifteen Town-maintained cemeteries in Town. All of the cemeteries were established prior to 1815. Plainfield Plain Cemetery is the largest and has the most potential for expansion in the future. The cemeteries that have the most potential for further use are all located in the village and residential zones. However, the Town's Zoning Ordinance allows cemeteries by special exception in the RC-I and RC-II zones only. Private burial grounds are currently not a permitted use. David Grobe is currently contracted to repair stones and do other similar maintenance projects in the cemeteries.

The Town history, Choice White Pines and Good Land offers interesting information about he private burial grounds and cemeteries in Town.

RECREATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES (Municipally Owned)

The Recreation and Open Space Chapter addresses the recreation opportunities in Town, including Burnaps Island and the Victor Hewes Memorial Field, listed in Appendix A at the end of this Chapter.

The 1993 Attitude Survey results show that less than half the respondents considered recreation

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

services to be "good" (48.7%). Another 25% of the respondents rated recreational services as "fair", with 6% giving recreation in Plainfield a "poor" rating. Approximately 20% of the respondents were uncertain. The written comments about recreation ranged from "fair for kids" to "What recreation?" to "Not a TOWN requirement".

The 1993 survey also shows that 30% of the respondents thought that commercial recreational facilities could be located throughout the Town. Some respondents felt that they should be located in the village areas only (28.6%); others (14.3%) thought "in rural areas only"; and 27.2% were uncertain where they would be best located. 49.3% of survey respondents thought tax dollars should be spent on purchasing conservation easements on property for recreational purposes.

In 1996, The Plainfield Trail Blazers formed in response to the Community Profile work. They work with The Conservation Commission to establish interconnected trail networks across private and public lands.

In 1999, the town hired George Prescott as a part-time recreational director. The following recreational opportunities are available to townspeople (some are partially funded through user fees): swimming and tennis (free) at KUA, baseball and soccer at the Plainfield School, and baseball at the Corey Tabor Field.

POSTAL SERVICES

Although Post Offices are not municipally-owned, postal services are an important component of the bundle of services expected in American communities. Reinforcing the service nature of Plainfield's villages, Post Offices serve each. As the Town grows, so must its Post Offices. Accommodating postal facilities is a planning matter. Currently, both Post Offices are in adequate facilities, although both occasionally experience parking shortages. Post Office parking needs should be considered in a village-wide parking plan.

ELECTRICITY

There are three different companies that provide electric service in the Town of Plainfield: Connecticut Valley Electric Company, Granite State Electric and New Hampshire Electric Cooperative Inc. The Community Facilities and Services Map delineate their service areas. It is not known what residents think of the services provided by each company. All of these companies restrict development in the easement areas for power lines and juncture boxes. Being in the jurisdiction of more than one Power Company may complicate future subdivisions.

CABLE TELEVISION

In New Hampshire, cable television franchises are awarded to cable companies on a town-by-town basis. Adelphia of Lebanon is franchised to serve Plainfield. The cable head (source of signal) comes from Lebanon. Cable lines are run on existing power poles where possible. It provides service to 400 residents. Cable television allows for better television reception with a town-wide aesthetic benefit, in 2002 the town will experience an upgrade in service to allow faster Internet access.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

TDS acquired the town's previously unique own Meriden Telephone Company. TDS services 475 lines in Plainfield. This Company also serves some Cornish customers. Beyond this Meriden-centered service area, the Verizon Company provides Touchtone and a variety of other telephone services. Dialing 911 alerts all emergency service providers. The local calling area has been expanded to include Lebanon and Hanover.

WATER DISTRICTS

Each of Plainfield's villages is served by a water system. In Meriden, there is also a sewage treatment plant.

The Plainfield Village Water District serves approximately one hundred subscribers, including a 12-unit condominium, a mobile home park and several businesses. A well near the Blow-Me-Down Brook supplies the village. In the course of a year, it is not unusual for there to be periods of critically low flow. Due to supply shortages, the expansion of the system or number of subscribers is severely restricted. The Water Commissioners, elected from the users, are responsible for the daily operation and maintenance of the system. Expenses and debt retirement are offset by the income from a base rate and a per gallon charge.

The Commissioners have, for quite a number of years, been looking for an alternate water source. Low pressure during dry spells and inadequate supply for the fire hydrants are reasons for seeking an alternate source. The fact that the District will not add any more users has negative implications for the future expansion of the village. A sewage system should also be considered, as existing small lots have little room for on-site septic systems.

In 2001, The Plainfield Water District constructed a 130,000-gallon storage tank on Sugar Hill Road, intended to enhance customer service. It fills during the night, so there is water available during daytime hours. Another improvement in the town's water resources is that all of the fire hydrants now operate and can be utilized properly.

The Meriden Village Water District, supplied by a well near Blood's Brook, has about 60 customers, including KUA, two churches, the library and several businesses. The system has adequate supply and capability for expansion. Along with water, the Meriden Village Water District has a sewage line and wastewater treatment plant that serves about 34 customers, including KUA and some businesses. This facility has potential to expand operations at this site.

FUNDING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

In Plainfield, like other towns, finances are an ongoing concern. Decisions concerning availability and quality of facilities and services affect residents and their experience, not only as Plainfield residents, but also as Plainfield taxpayers. The budget cycle begins in July when the Planning Board and Town Administrator request departmental input pertaining to capital needs and use this information to revise the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). The Capital Improvements Plan

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

identifies and prioritizes the Town's capital improvement needs and recommends a schedule for funding and purchase or construction of those improvements. A capital improvement is a major expenditure or project undertaken by the Town or School District that is generally not recurring. The capital improvements program is used by the Selectmen and Budget Committee to formulate budgets for both operating and capital expenditures. The budget cycle ends at Town Meeting when voters take action on warrant and ballot articles. Through the capital budgeting process, the Town and School have begun to work more closely in coordinating expenditures.

Reserve funds are used extensively by the Town to pay for capital items. Money is set aside each year in different accounts in anticipation of major capital expenditures. In this way, the Town positions itself as an interest earner, rather than an interest payer.

In rare cases, such as the renovation of the Meriden Town Hall, the Town incurs debt to finance capital improvements.

Capital budgeting assists in managing growth. Public expenditures for capital projects, such as road improvements, can influence the location and timing of development. A CIP provides a mechanism to wisely plan for those public expenditures.

In order to assure that development will not cause an undue financial burden on the Town, the Planning Board should review each proposal in light of its fiscal impact. The CIP is a good guide to use in the review, as it documents planned expenditures for the next five to seven years. Where municipal services would be overburdened or the Town faced with undue fiscal hardship, the development can be deemed scattered and premature.

GOALS

1. Sustain the desirability of the Plainfield living environment by maintaining and expanding community services in an economically responsible manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Town should look into acquiring additional land to ensure adequate future sand and gravel supply.
2. The Town should continue to promote recycling and proper disposal of household hazardous wastes at regular household hazardous waste collections.
3. A committee charged with finding land for community facilities, such as off-street parking in both villages, should be established.
4. The Town should continue its practice of capital budgeting using the CIP to establish budget priorities, develop a revenue policy for each capital expense, and stabilize the tax rate.
5. The booklet, Town of Plainfield Guide to Services: Information for new residents and taxpayers should be updated.

APPENDIX A

INVENTORY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND UTILITIES

FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Meriden Volunteer Fire Department

LOCATION: Rte. 120 (Village Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 4150

ABUTTERS: Meriden Marketplace, Kimball Union Academy's Track Field, and private residences

PROPERTY: .23 acre with a building with two sections, one measuring 45'x50' and the other 24'x30'

AGE: 1974

WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook-up?

SEPTIC: Meriden Village Water District hook-up

Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department

LOCATION: Rte. 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 02, Lot 5052

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: .12 acre with a 2100 sq. ft. building

AGE: 1969

WATER: Town

SEPTIC: Septic

POLICE HEADQUARTERS

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 12, Lot 100

ABUTTERS: Meriden Bird Sanctuary, KUA and private residences

PROPERTY: .64 acres with the Police Dept.'s main office space being approximately 20'x40' with a 12'x15' entranceway.

AGE: 1996

WATER: Meriden Village Water District

SEPTIC: Meriden Village Water District

TOWN HALLS

Meriden Town Hall

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 12, Lot 100

ABUTTERS: Private residences, Meriden Bird Sanctuary and KUA

PROPERTY: .64 acres with 2660 sq. ft. (floor area) building

AGE: 1896

WATER: Meriden Village Water District

SEPTIC: Meriden Village Water District

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Plainfield Town Hall

LOCATION: Route 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 02A, Lot 7100
ABUTTERS: Library, private residences, William Smith Auction Gallery, Fire Station
PROPERTY: .36 acres with building about 4240 sq. ft.
AGE: 1798
WATER: Plainfield Village Water District hook up
SEPTIC: On-site

HIGHWAY GARAGE

LOCATION: Stage Road/Penniman Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 10 Lot 1000
ABUTTERS: Singing Hills (Religious retreat/institution) and private residences
PROPERTY: 4 acres with main garage (50'x100'), equipment shed (12'x66') and salt shed (16'x32')
AGE: 1983
WATER: Shallow well on site
SEPTIC: On-site

GRAVEL PIT

LOCATION: Ferry Hill Road (Rural Conservation I) Tax Map: 1, Lot 200
ABUTTERS: Private residences and open space
PROPERTY: 18.6 acres
AGE: Since 1980 (estimate)
WATER: No plumbing
SEPTIC: No plumbing

SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

Plainfield Recycling Shed

LOCATION: Stage Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 10, Lot 1000
ABUTTERS: Singing Hills (religious facility/retreat) and private residences
PROPERTY: 2.04 acres. It shares acreage with highway facilities. The shed measures 14' x 30' with a concrete floor and wiring. There are two large trailers for metals and junk mail. Three smaller dumpsters are for corrugated cardboard and trash.
AGE: 1991
WATER: No plumbing
SEPTIC: No plumbing

WATER DISTRICTS

Meriden Village Water District

LOCATION: Bonner Road (Village Residential) Tax Map: 10, Lot 5775
Storage Tank on Sugar Hill Road, 1999
ABUTTERS: Plainfield Elementary School, Kimball Union Academy and its open land, private residences
PROPERTY: 17.1 acres with shed (27'x29'), garage (24'x24'), shed/shop (22'x24'). Also own a water tower located on KTJA property Tax Map: 13, Lot 9937, and an old well located on .25 acres

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

surrounded by KUA land on Park Road Tax Map: 13, Lot 6750

AGE: 1982

Plainfield Village Water District

LOCATION: Hayward Road (Floodplain Zone) Tax Map: 2, Lot 9400

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: 1 acre, with utility shed 12'x12'

AGE: 1970's

LIBRARIES

Philip Read Memorial Library

LOCATION: Route 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 2A, Lot 3900

ABUTTERS: Private residences and Town Hall

PROPERTY: 200'x60' with approx. 1800 sq. ft. building, plus an additional adjacent acre.

AGE: 1920, with children's room and bathroom addition in 1974. The addition approved in 2002, and currently being built includes the removal of the 1974 addition.

WATER: Plainfield Village Water District hook up

SEPTIC: On-site system

Meriden Library

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 0822

ABUTTERS: Meriden Grange Hall, Meriden Telephone Co., Tariki Stoneware, Kimball Union Academy housing, and private residences

PROPERTY: 200'x200' with a building of about 2400 square feet (1216 sq. ft. foot print).

AGE: 1964

WATER: Meriden Village Water District

SEPTIC: On-site

SCHOOLS

Kimball Union Academy

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 13 Lot 9920 (one of the main lots but several others). KUA owns many acres and buildings on the Meriden side of Town. Some are on different roads and in different zones. The bulk of the institution is located around Main Street.

ABUTTERS: Private residences, Congregational and Baptist Churches, stores and businesses

PROPERTY: 1492.02 acres total and about 33 buildings, which include a dining hall, dormitories, library, art center, sports facilities and a general store which houses the Meriden post office.

AGE: Has been an institution since 1313, with first building constructed in 1815

WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook up

SEPTIC: Meriden Village Water District sewer hook-up

Plainfield Elementary School

LOCATION: Bonner Road (Village Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 2600

ABUTTERS: Meriden Village Water District septic treatment plant, private residences, open land owned by Kimball Union Academy

PROPERTY: 41.5 acres with building (32,117 sq. ft.) and parking lot. Poll voting and town meetings are held in the school's gymnasium, and in the music room.

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

AGE: 1973 original building, with one addition done in 1990 and another in 2001

WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook up

SEPTIC: On-site, but a sewer extension is available to hook to septic treatment plant if needed

Runnemedede School

LOCATION: Route 12A Plainfield Village

ABUTTERS: Smith Auction Gallery

PROPERTY: 75 Acres with planned building (2003) of 9656 sq. ft. and parking for 20 cars.

AGE: 2002 six temporary classrooms, 2003 permanent structure.

WATER: Plainfield Water District hook-up

SEPTIC: Private System

MUNICIPALLY-OWNED RECREATION AREAS

Burnaps Island

LOCATION: Connecticut River on northwest part of town Tax Map: 5, Lot 1700

ABUTTERS: Veterinary practice, private land, and Vermont residences

PROPERTY: 10 acres with a primitive canoe campsite

AGE: Town acquired it in 1974.

WATER: No running water but the river that flows all around it!

SEPTIC: Dug privy, monitored by the Conservation Commission

Victor Hewes Memorial Field

LOCATION: On the west end of Stage Road (Village Residential) Tax Map: 2 Lot 9918

ABUTTERS: Blow-Me-Down Brook, Private residences and the Plain Cemetery

PROPERTY: 18.97 acres which has a baseball/softball playing field, sandbox, picnic area, a short loop trail in woods along a brook, and bicycle racks

AGE: Town acquired in 1989

WATER: No running water

SEPTIC: Conservation Commission pays to rent chemical toilets during summer season

Farnum Lot

LOCATION: 78.6 acres with trails and picnic sites on Farnum Hill in Meriden. Tax Map: 11A, Lot 65

ABUTTERS: Private residences

AGE: Town acquired in February 1987.

CHURCHES

COMMUNITY BAPTIST CHURCH OF PLAINFIELD

LOCATION: Peterson Road and Route 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 02A Lot 4050

ABUTTERS: Plainfield General Store, the church's parsonage and private residences

PROPERTY: 2.36 acres with church (approx. 4320 sq. ft.); parsonage (1292 sq. ft.); barn for storage; Corey Taber Memorial Park (picnic area, tennis and basketball courts and ball field); parking area (10 vehicles, max.)

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

AGE: Church-1860, parsonage and barn 1820
WATER: Hook up to Plainfield Village Water District
SEPTIC: On-site

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH

LOCATION: Route 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map 2A Lot 5800
ABUTTERS: Private residences and The Plainfield Volunteer Fire Department
PROPERTY: acres with church (12, 000 square feet), includes parking area
AGE: Built in 2001
Water: Town
Septic: Private

First Baptist Church of Meriden

LOCATION: Rte.120 and Main Street (Village Residential) Church - Tax Map: 013, Lot 8000A; Parsonage - Map 013, Lot 4700
ABUTTERS:

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF MERIDEN

LOCATION: Rte 120 and Main Street (VR) Tax Map: 013, Lot 8000A: Parsonage Map 013, Lot 4700
ABUTTERS: Kimball Union Academy - playing fields, workshop, faculty and students' homes
PROPERTY: .35 acres with church (3166 sq. ft. avg. floor area) meeting room, small kitchen in basement), and .562 acres with parsonage (748 sq. ft.- house & 480 sq. ft.-garage)
AGE: Church-1839, parsonage w/garage about 1960
WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook up for church and parsonage
SEPTIC: Church and parsonage have on-site septic

MERIDEN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

LOCATION: Main Street and Chellis Road (Village Residential) Tax Map: 013, Lot 9933
ABUTTERS: Kimball Union Academy dormitories, Headmaster's Home, private residences, and Meriden Bird Sanctuary
PROPERTY: 3 acres with church (7954 sq. ft.) and parsonage (3089 sq. ft.) which houses minister's home, assembly area, office, classrooms and kitchen
AGE: Church-1897, parsonage-1777, with many additions through the years
WATER: Meriden Village Water District for church and parsonage
SEPTIC: On-site systems

CEMETERIES

Colby or River Cemetery

LOCATION: River Road (Rural Conservation II) Tax Map: 4, Lot #- none
ABUTTERS: Private residences, McNamara Dairy farm, and Setedsal (Torkelson's perennial plant farm)
PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, but .17 acres added in 1991, has about 75 graves with room for expansion
AGE: Est. 1788, the first public cemetery in Town
STATUS: Open = Lots available for sale

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Coreyville or Willow Brook Road Cemetery

LOCATION: Ladieu Road (Village Residential) Tax Map 6 or 11, Lot #- none

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, has about 30 stones and unmarked graves

AGE: 1790, with last graves dated 1880

STATUS: Closed = No lots available for sale

Daniels Cemetery

LOCATION: Black Hill Road (Rural Conservation II) Tax Map: 6, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, has 13 graves

AGE: 1829

STATUS: Closed: No lots available for sale

East Plainfield Cemetery

LOCATION: Barker Road off from Croydon Turnpike (Village Residential) Tax Map: 18, Lot 1100

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown

AGE: 1796

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Freeman Cemetery

LOCATION: Route 12A (Rural Conservation I) Tax Map: 2, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private Residences, Townline Equipment and a car sales and repair business

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown

AGE: 1806

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Gilkey Cemetery

LOCATION: Stage Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 7, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private residences, open land and Blow-Me-Down Brook across the road

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown, space available

AGE: 1767

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Gleason Cemetery

LOCATION: Gleason Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 7700

ABUTTERS: Private Residences and open land

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, but one of larger graveyards, number of graves unknown

AGE: 1755

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Hopkins Cemetery

LOCATION: Hopkins Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot- none

ABUTTER: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, 3 stones and some unmarked graves

AGE: 1793

STATUS: Closed: No lots available for sale

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

Methodist Hill Road Cemetery

LOCATION: Methodist Hill Road (Rural Conservation I) Tax Map: 18, Lot 3700

ABUTTER: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown

AGE: 1840

STATUS: Closed: No lots available for sale

Mill Cemetery

LOCATION: Colby Hill Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 10, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown, number of future burial sites is numerous

AGE: 1783

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Moulton-Yard Cemetery

LOCATION: Andrews Lane off of Rte. 120 (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 1150

ABUTTERS: Private residences

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown, future burials unknown

AGE: 1810

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Penniman Cemetery

LOCATION: Penniman Road (Rural Residential) Tax Map: 10, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private residences, town garage and Penniman and Blow-Me-Down Brooks

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, over 60 graves and has potential for some more

AGE: 1810

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Plainfield Plain Cemetery

LOCATION: Route 12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 2, Lot # - none

ABUTTERS: Private residences with home businesses and Victor Hewes Memorial playing field and woods

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, largest cemetery in Town, number of graves unknown, potential for expansion is quite large

AGE: 1767

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Raynsford Cemetery

LOCATION: Bonner Road (Village Residential) Tax Map: 10, Lot 1300

ABUTTERS: Private residences, Plainfield Elementary School, and Meriden Waste Water Treatment Plant

PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, number of graves unknown

AGE: 1808

STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

Westgate-Peterson Cemetery

V. COMMUNITY FACILITIES, SERVICES AND UTILITIES

LOCATION: Freeman Road (Rural Conservation I) Tax Map: 2, Lot # - none
ABUTTERS: Private residences, open land
PROPERTY: Acreage unknown, over 70 graves, very limited room
AGE: 1784
STATUS: Open: Lots available for sale

POST OFFICES

Meriden Post Office

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 12, Lot 210
ABUTTERS: Private residence
PROPERTY: Kimball Union Academy owns the Meriden Country Store building that houses the Post Office (36'x15')
AGE: 1940
WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook-up
SEPTIC: Meriden Village Water District sewer hook-up

Plainfield Post Office

LOCATION: Rte.12A (Village Residential) Tax Map: 2A, Lot 4405
ABUTTERS: Private residences
PROPERTY: 1.5 acres with building (1472 sq. ft.) and parking area
AGE: 1986
WATER: Own well
SEPTIC: On-site

TELEPHONE SERVICE

TDS TELECOM

LOCATION: Main Street (Village Residential) Tax Map: 13, Lot 4405
ABUTTERS: Meriden Library, Meriden Grange, Tariki Stoneware and private residences
PROPERTY: 2.6 acres with building of 2068 sq. ft. floor area
AGE: 1973, with renovations done in 1990
WATER: Meriden Village Water District hook up
SEPTIC: On-site

CABLE TELEVISION

Adeiphia Cable Company

LOCATION: Lebanon
AGE: 12 years

VI. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE LANDS

INTRODUCTION

Community recreation is available close to home. It improves the quality of life in a town and may include a wide range of activities, from passive pastimes, such as bird watching, to active ones, such as baseball. Community recreation is inclusive, providing opportunities for everyone from the preschooler to the senior to the person with disabilities.

Most small, rural Upper Valley communities have limited funds for community recreation. Support for recreation occurs by providing outdoor opportunities rather than labor intensive programs and capital intensive facilities. In addition to the summer swimming, softball, baseball, soccer and tennis programs, most of the recreation activity in Plainfield is land-based, water-based or snow- and ice-based outdoor recreation that is dependent on publicly accessible open space. Fortunately, Plainfield's geographic location and topography combine to create many natural recreational opportunities for its inhabitants. The existing network of old roads and abandoned pastures, the natural brooks, ponds and streams, all combine to provide opportunities for hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, snowmobile, hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits. In addition, Plainfield is conveniently located close enough to recreation facilities in Lebanon, Hanover and Hartford so that residents can take advantage of some of the most capital-intensive facilities in those other communities.

Plainfield's townspeople can enjoy land protected by conservation easements that ensure their continued open space status in the future. Nearly 1700 acres within the Town are protected by such easements.

Responses to the Master Plan Update Survey, taken in March of 1993, reflect a large base of support for continuing to preserve Plainfield's open space. Over 50% of the respondents to the Survey would support the use of tax dollars to purchase conservation easements for trails, and to preserve scenic views and conservation lands. Forty-nine percent would use tax dollars for the purchase of conservation easements for recreation purposes. According to Survey respondents, Plainfield's uncrowded and quiet conditions, scenic quality and outdoor recreation contribute in an important way toward making Plainfield a desirable place to live.

The Plainfield Trailblazers, a group that resulted from the 1996 Community Profile Exercise, has worked over the last years to improve and expand Plainfield's formal and informal trail network. In addition to trail development and maintenance, the group is developing a Plainfield booklet titled "Guide to Class VI Roads, Trails and Boat Access" The work includes a map showing the various trails and public lands available within Plainfield. Connecting, via walking trails, various tracts of conserved public land are one of the group's primary objectives.

RECREATION RESOURCES

Land-based

Open Space Lands:

Plainfield's open space lands are among the Town's most significant assets. Open space lands usually lack buildings or complex manmade structures. They may be used for agriculture, forestry and outdoor recreation; or they may be left in their natural state to serve important environmental and aesthetic functions.

The pattern of open spaces between structures and between settlements is a key element in defining the character of Plainfield. Fortunately, residents in the past have been sensitive to maintaining and enhancing this character, as is evident in the appearance of the Town today. In spite of extensive residential and institutional development, visually, environmentally and recreationally important open space lands have been identified and some progress has been made in protecting them.

As shown on Map VI-1, protected open space lands are scattered through the Town. The Blow-Me-Down Brook and Connecticut River Valley agricultural soils enjoy some focused protection efforts. Many of the parcels are open to the public for recreational use.

State Owned Open Spaces:

Annie Duncan State Forest: This forest consists of two separate parcels totaling 113 acres of land off Red Hill Road in East Plainfield. Annie Duncan State Forest is a bequest to the State by the late Annie Duncan of Meriden. There are no trails as such and its use is subject to State regulations.

Town Owned Open Spaces:

Spencer Lot: Spencer Lot is a 104-acre parcel of land located on Columbus Jordan Road (off Stage Road) which was purchased by the Conservation Commission in 1973. A self-guided nature trail was created in 1981 but has not been maintained in recent years. It is open to the public and may be reached by foot.

Farnum Lot: This 78-acre tract was purchased by abutting neighbors and gifted to the town. The Upper Valley Land Trust holds a conservation easement on the land. Several existing logging roads and a newly established trail on the property provide interesting walks. A small beaver pond on the western edge of the property is the most environmentally significant feature of the property. A new "Farnum Trails" trailhead parking was established in 2001 on the newly conserved Ira and Sara Townsend Land on Columbus-Jordan Road. This trail head avoids the need to use Farnum Road (Class VI) and the logging landing on the Farnum Lot for parking. Hunting, biking and hiking are allowed on this property. There are also several old cellar holes to be found.

Victor Hewes Memorial Field: A 19.5 acre parcel of land off Stage Road was purchased in 1988. The land is largely open and is currently utilized several times a week by local groups for outdoor recreation.

Other Land and Open Spaces:

Benson Town Forest; the Cole Brook Trail was established as a connector to the Moulton Trail easement in 2001 and is currently signed at the Moulton Trail intersection and at the Cram Hill Road/Cole Brook Trail intersection. The trail was designed for the following uses - hiking, snowshoeing, skiing or bicycling. Hunting is also allowed on this property.

Burnaps Island.

Townsend Lot: a property that was provided to the Town under the LCHIP program in association with an easement on the Walker Farm. A portion of this land includes the rock outcroppings on the front face of "Lower French's Ledges" (between the primary recreational site and the old ski area for KUA). According to the deed, this property is to be managed in a wild state and no hunting is allowed there, however, scenic values are certainly afforded by this property as viewed from Meriden village.

Helen Woodruff Smith Bird Sanctuary: The Meriden Bird Club is the oldest bird club in the United States. The Club owns a 32.3-acre bird sanctuary off Main Street in Meriden Village. Trails are maintained for foot activities, such as walking or cross-country skiing. A natural theater glade exists which is ideal for picnicking and bird watching.

Corey Taber Field: This facility, which is owned by the Plainfield Community Church, provides a much needed recreation area for Plainfield residents. The field includes a picnic area, tennis courts, basketball courts, swings, and a softball field.

Morgan Hill (Goslovitch Easement) - provides a walking trail to Poverty Lane in Lebanon and includes transitory public use of the lands for recreation (including hunting). A "Bragg Trail" easement is currently being finalized that connects to the Morgan Hill property, adding additional public trail opportunities in this area of town.

Moulton Trail - 100' trail corridor with a 6' wide non-motorized trail provision. Connecting the bird sanctuary and Benson Forest via a small private trail.

Roads and Trails:

One of the primary recreational resources available to the people of Plainfield is the network of roads and trails. Map VI-1 shows all the roads and trails approved for public use. There are 75 maintained roads in Plainfield approximately 42 miles of which are paved and 33 miles are gravel. There are numerous Class VI roads in Town, in a variety of conditions. The most popular Class VI roads, from a recreation perspective, are found in East Plainfield at the end of Croydon Turnpike. Snowmobiles, cross-country skiers, runners, horseback riders and cyclists using mountain bikes are all frequent users of the Class VI roads and trails in all parts of Plainfield.

Bean Road, in Meriden, offers some off-street parking, thanks to an informal arrangement with private landowners. Following is a popular loop with skiers and snowmobiles:

VI. RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE LANDS

Bean Road (class VI) to the intersection of Grantham Mountain Road; take Snow Road (private property) which starts directly across from the Bean Road/Grantham Mountain Road intersection, to the Blow-me-down Snow riders warming hut; turn right at the warming hut following the trail all the way to Croydon Turnpike (Class VI); turn right onto Croydon Turnpike and stay on the roadway all the way to the Grantham Mountain Road intersection passing Chase Pond on your right (note: at the only obvious fork in the road, Croydon Turnpike goes to the right); the Grantham "warming hut" should be visible on your left; turn right onto Grantham Mountain Road and follow it back to the Bean Road intersection. The total trip is approximately eight miles. Portions of this route follow along the Corbin Park Hunting Preserve owned by the Blue Mountain Forest Association.

Many other Town roads have been officially "discontinued" and, while many of these continue to be used for recreational purposes, no legal public right-of-way exists. There are a number of footpaths available; some are quite formally laid out and maintained and others are a little more than game trails in the woods. Most trails, including the very popular trails up French's Ledges and Snow Mountain, lie on private land and are not maintained in any formal way.

The recently acquired Fred Moulton trail/easement is cited as a good example of efforts to connect lands near village centers that are opened to the public. The trail, when combined with one short private land crossing allows pedestrians to traverse from the Meriden Bird Sanctuary to the Benson Town Forest.

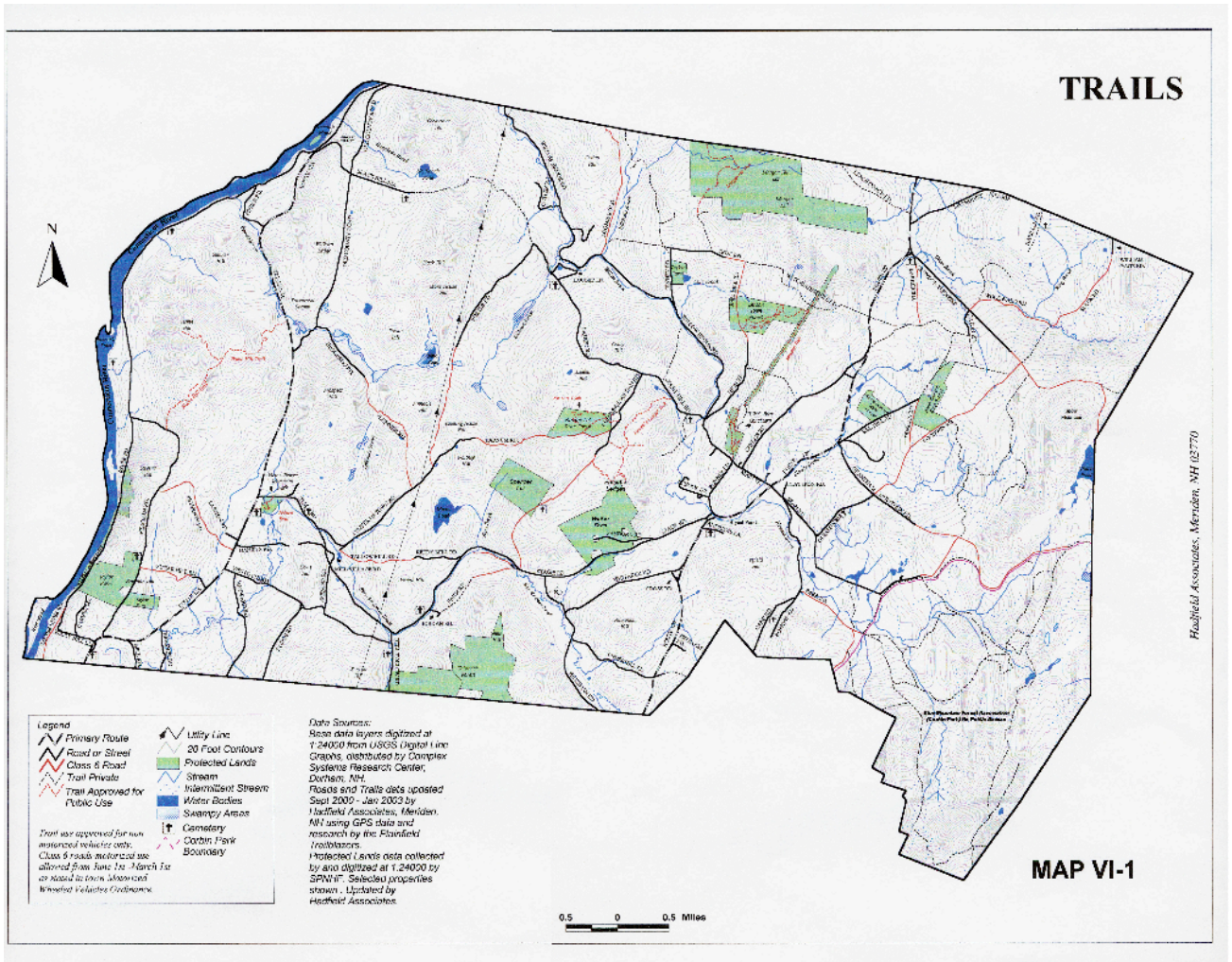
Trails to Picnic Spots With Great Views:

French's Ledges: Named for the family of Hezekiah French, these 1300 foot high rock outcroppings overlook Meriden Village and are accessible from various points along Columbus Jordan Road or Colby Hill Road. The short hike from the trail head at the end of the maintained portion of Columbus Jordan Road makes French's Ledges a popular spot in the early fall and spring.

Snow Mountain: Starting from a trail head on the Croydon Turnpike in East Plainfield, a trail leads up the 2100 foot Snow Mountain which over looks Chase Pond.

Home Hill Trail: Currently being cleared by P. Trailblazers, has great seasonal views of the Connecticut River Valley and Green Mountains to the West, with potential year round views. Work is planned with local property owners to assess potential for improved public view opportunity.

MAP VI-1 PLAINFIELD TRAIL MAP



Water-Based

Connecticut River:

Plainfield's largest recreational resource is the Connecticut River. The low water mark on the westerly bank forms the western boundary of the Town and the State. This waterway, stretching from the Canadian border to the Long Island Sound, offers nearly limitless opportunities for water-related activities. Sumner's Falls in Plainfield is one of the only remaining undeveloped rapids in the River. These rapids offer challenging white water for kayaking, but are safe for experts only. Local birder's have noticed an increase in viewing opportunities for Bald Eagles along the Conn. River corridor, especially near Sumner's Falls and River Road.

Caution is advised to users of the River due to the artificially controlled water flow caused by the Wilder hydroelectric dam, especially in the area of Sumner's Falls.

The River offers excellent fishing for small-mouth bass and walleye. Opportunities also exist to catch trout and pike *and large mouth bass*.

The Town of Plainfield owns Burnap's Island, which is accessible by canoe; it is located in the River at the north intersection of NH Rte. 12A and River Road. This island is large enough for camping and offers a nice, sandy beach at the south end. The Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission, working with the Upper Valley Land Trust, have established a "primitive" campsite on the Island. Plainfield does not have a public access to the River at this time. There is a State-owned boat landing on NH Rte. 12A in Cornish just below Plainfield's south line, and access for canoes and fishing on NH Rte. 12A just north of the Lebanon boundary.

Streams and Ponds:

Plainfield has additional recreation opportunities on its two major streams, Willow Brook and Blow-Me-Down Brook. Both brooks contain numerous unsupervised swimming holes and provide trout fishing opportunities in the spring and early summer.

There are four major ponds in Plainfield: Moses, Chase, Mud and Sky Ranch Pond. Fish species such as perch, pickerel and horned pout may be found in these ponds. There are no public access points to Moses, Mud and Sky Ranch ponds, as all but Chase Pond are surrounded by private property.

TOWN ORGANIZED PROGRAMS

Recreation Commission Activities: Each year, the Town appropriates funds to be used by the Recreation Commission to offer programs for school age children. Currently, swimming, softball, baseball, soccer, and tennis programs are held each summer. Basketball clinics are held in the winter. In recognition of the expanding demand for programs, in the year 2000 the town began providing a small stipend to its Recreation Director.

PRIVATE FACILITIES

Kimball Union Academy: Kimball Union Academy, a private school located in Meriden Village, makes some of its facilities available for school programs and town programs, and to Plainfield residents, in general. These facilities include the ice rink, swimming pool, cross-country ski trails and the outdoor track and tennis courts.

RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE NEEDS

The State of New Hampshire has developed a generic set of standards for outdoor recreation facilities. These are included in an appendix to this chapter. The State standards are not used to measure the adequacy of Plainfield's recreation opportunities, because the Master Plan Survey (1993) has assessed the interest in Plainfield residents for additional recreation facilities. Most respondents (48.7%) to the Survey rate recreation services in Town highly. Thirty-one percent give recreation a fair or poor rating. Most significantly, 20% of respondents were uncertain. This means that one in five of the respondents was unfamiliar enough with the recreation services in Town to be uncertain as to its rating from their perspective. The existing programs and outdoor recreation opportunities should be better advertised in Town so that this rather large segment of the community is knowledgeable about the recreation opportunities that do exist. Open space and recreational were frequently cited by survey respondents as community cornerstones, resources that should be preserved into the next century. The favorites were:

- French's Ledges
- Connecticut River/Sumner's Falls
- Mill Covered Bridge swimming hole
- Snow Mountain area

French's Ledges, Mill Covered Bridge swimming hole and much of Snow Mountain are all KUA properties. Arranging for long-term public use of these properties should be undertaken.

GOALS

1. Preserve Plainfield's scenic beauty and significant natural resources for present and future generations.
2. Provide adequate access opportunities to public waters.
3. Continue to provide an adequate level of funding, support and technical assistance to help community outdoor recreation providers meet existing and future needs for outdoor recreation programs and facilities.
4. Create a network of greenways, trails, pedestrian paths and bikeways that provide access to, and connection between Town-owned lands, conserved lands and community facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. New Hampshire Outdoors 2003-2007 is New Hampshire's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). It serves as the State's official plan for outdoor recreation for the ensuing five years. The SCORP identifies major issues and challenges concerning the state's recreation and natural resources and offers a series of recommendations to address those issues. Conservation Commission should review and implement applicable recommendations in this plan.
2. Public access to the Connecticut River for recreational purposes should be established in Plainfield.
3. Plainfield should encourage the donation of conservation easements that include the right of public access.
4. The Conservation Commission should continue to protect and enhance the public's right of access to the existing roads and trails by planning and implementing a system of trails which connect publicly accessible open spaces and community facilities.
5. The Town should not "throw up" or "discontinue" any additional Class VI roads, so that the public's present right of access to these areas will remain intact. Conversion of some Class VI Roads to Class A or B Trails should be considered.
6. The Town should attempt to discourage development along Class VI roads. Returning roads to a maintained status increases costs to the Town and, at the same time, reduces the recreational value of the road. To this end, the Town's ordinances prohibiting development on Class VI roads and restricting seasonal use of Class VI roads should be kept in effect.
7. The Town should work to provide parking near existing trailheads and Class VI roads to assist in utilization of these resources.
8. The Town should attempt to reacquire some of the rights to roads which were once in the public domain, but which have been "discontinued."
9. Plainfield should continue to work with the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission and other governmental agencies to develop a bicycle network for the Region.
10. The Conservation Commission should undertake a Natural Resources inventory as well as that of open space lands and prioritize them to focus conservation efforts.
11. The Conservation Commission should continue to monitor conservation lands and easements, and work with the Selectmen to enforce the conservation easements held by the Town.

APPENDIX B

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITY STANDARDS

<u>Facility</u>	Standard Per 1,000 <u>People</u>
Archery Range	0.10
Baseball Diamond	1.10
Basketball/Hard Courts	0.80
Boat/Fishing Access	1.80
Campsites (Vacation)	13.00
Football Fields	0.10
Golf Courses, Regulation (18 holes)	0.04
Gymnasiums	0.25
Ice Hockey Rinks	0.05
Ice Skating Area	0.14
Open Space/Natural Areas (acres)	51.00
Picnic Tables	8.00
Parks, Community (acres)	6.00
Playgrounds (town and school)	0.50
Playgrounds (acres)	2.10
Shooting Ranges	0.08
Skiing (x-country areas)	0.10
Skiing (downhill areas)	0.09
Soccer Fields	0.16
Swimming (beach)	0.50
Swimming	0.14
Tennis Courts	0.95
Track	0.04
Trails, Hiking (miles)	2.20
Trails, Snowmobile (miles)	3.90

Source: New Hampshire Outdoors 1988-1993, Office of State Planning

VII. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

The regional rate of both traffic and population growth in the Upper Valley Region for the 1986-1995 period averaged 2.5%. While it is unlikely that this rate of growth will be maintained it has resulted in high congestion in the Route 12A and Route 120 corridors to Lebanon and Hanover. Development in Lebanon and West Lebanon has created a strong negative attitude to the consideration of any new development in the Plainfield and Meriden communities. Residents want their sections of Town to remain rural and, thus, are apt to reject any attempts at commercialisation that would change the current quality of the rural environment.

PUBLIC ROAD SYSTEM

The public road system in Plainfield remains at about 104 miles. There are 6.31 miles of Class I roads that make up the State highway system, 13.12 miles of Class II roads that are the secondary State highway system, and 58.53 miles of Class V roads that are the responsibility of the municipality. Most of the roads in Town are the Town's responsibility. Almost half are unpaved. Map VII-1 provides a comprehensive view of these roads.

Road Maintenance

The maintenance of the road network is one of the major expenses of the operating budget of the Town. The highway budget remains at about 30% of the total Town budget. As might be imagined, the Town highway maintenance program receives a significant amount of attention from the community and its leaders. The consistently good condition of the Town's roads reflects the positive attitude of the Town Road Agent, both of which should be recognized and encouraged. The use of modern computer technology, such as the Road Surface Management System (RSMS) program, and the interaction of the Town Highway Agent with peers in the neighboring communities, should also be encouraged.

TABLE VII-1-HIGHWAY MILEAGE BY FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

PLAINFIELD

Functional Class	Description	Mileage
I	<i>Primary State Highways</i> consist of all existing or proposed highways on the primary state highway system, excepting all portions within the compact sections of cities and towns of 7,500 inhabitants and over. The State assumes full control and pays all the costs of construction, maintenance and reconstruction of its sections, excepting portions of such highways within the compact section of Plainfield which are classified as Class IV highways.	6.31
II	<i>Secondary State Highways</i> consist of all existing or proposed highways on the secondary state highway system, excepting portions within the compact section of Plainfield which are classified as Class IV highways. Currently all highways that are improved or reconstructed to the satisfaction of the NH Commissioner of Transportation will be maintained by NHDOT. All unimproved highways, where no state and local funds have been expended, must be maintained by the municipality.	13.12
III	<i>Recreational Roads</i> consist of all roads leading to, and within, state reservations designated by the Legislature. The NHDOT assumes full control of reconstruction and maintenance of such roads.	0.00
IV	<i>City and Town Streets</i> consist of all state highways within the compact section of Plainfield. Class I and Class II highways through these areas include NH Route 120 and NH Route 12A	0.00
V	<i>Rural Roads</i> consist of all other traveled highways which the city or town has the duty to maintain.	58.53
VI	<i>Un-maintained Roads</i> consist of all other existing public right-of-ways, including highways discontinued as open highways, highways closed and subject to gates and bars, and highways not maintained in suitable condition for travel for five years or more.	26.06
TOTAL		104.02

Traffic Projections

Looking ahead to Plainfield's future, unless there is some remarkably large traffic-generating land use that locates in Town, there should be no surprising increase in traffic volume. Table VII-2 contains a forecast made by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission with the most recent data available. Overall, a 25% increase in average daily traffic is expected.

TABLE VII-2-AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC: 1994 ACTUAL AND ESTIMATES FOR 1999, 2004 AND 2014

Location	1994 ADT	1999 ADT	2004 ADT	2014 ADT
Colby Hill Road, over Bloods Brook	135	146	157	169
Daniels Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	256	276	297	321
Hayward Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	123	133	143	154
Hell Hollow Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	139	150	161	174
Methodist Hill Road, over Great Brook	395	426	459	495
NH Route 12A, north of Plainfield Village	2,882	3,106	3,348	3,608
NH Route 120, south of Lebanon line	2,911	3,138	3,382	3,645
NH Route 120, over Bloods Brook	2,428	2,617	2,821	3,040
Penniman Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	269	290	312	337
Stage Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	710	765	825	889
Stage Road, west of Penniman Road	741	799	861	928
Westgate Road, over Blow-me-down Brook	164	177	191	205

Source: UVLSRPC, 1994 Counts and *Projections*.

Access to Roads and Highways

An important piece of State legislation pertinent to roads in Plainfield is *Driveways and Other Accesses to the Public Way (RSA 236, Section 13)*. The law states that anyone wishing construct or substantially alter any driveway, entrance, exit or approach within the right-of-way of any Class I, Class III or the State-maintained portion of a Class II highway, must apply for a permit with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT). In Plainfield, this requirement applies to any new or substantially altered access points along Routes 12A and 120, and Stage Road. The DOT's standards require that:

- The safest possible location for access shall be selected;
- There must be adequate drainage and grades to permit a safe and controlled approach to the highway in all seasons of the year;
- No more than one access shall be allowed per parcel of land (a commercial or industrial enterprise and a subdivision are considered a single parcel under the law), unless there is an all season safe sight distance of four hundred feet (400') in both directions along the highway;

VII. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

- No more than two (2) access points shall be allowed from any one highway to any one parcel of land unless the parcel's frontage along that highway exceeds five hundred feet (500'); and
- The width of the driveway, entrance, exit, or approach shall not exceed fifty feet (50'), except for normal flare at its junction with the highway.

RSA 236:16 also regulates access to town-maintained roads. In towns that have adopted subdivision regulations, this legislation gives the planning board the power to adopt regulations to review access to town roads. Thus, the Plainfield Planning Board has the power to regulate access to any Town road. The Town has adopted standards that will ensure safe and controlled access points to all Town roads in all seasons of the year. An approved access permit is required in the Town's Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision and Site Plan Review Regulations.

- The following standards are recommended:
- The safest possible location(s) for access shall be selected.
- There must be adequate drainage and grades to permit a safe and controlled approach to the highway in all seasons of the year. The slope of the driveway or access point shall not exceed twelve percent (12%). Surface water runoff shall be diverted so it will not drain onto the roadway.
- The width of the driveway, entrance, exit or approach shall not exceed fifty feet (50').
- Only one access point shall be allowed per parcel of land (a commercial or industrial enterprise and a subdivision are considered a single parcel) unless the following all season safe sight distance in both directions along the road can be met:

<u>Road Class</u>	<u>Design Speed</u>	
		▪ <i>Local Road</i> <i>30 MPH or lower</i>
▪ Collector Road	31 - 40 MPH	
▪ Minor Arterial	41 - 50 MPH	
▪ Arterial Road	51 MPH or more	

- No more than two (2) access points shall be allowed from any one town road to any one parcel of land unless the parcel's frontage along that road exceeds five hundred feet (500'). The same ratio of two access points per 500 feet of frontage, provided the minimum safe sight distance requirements can be met, shall be used for parcels which have more than 500 feet of frontage.

Off-site Road Improvements

Even if the new road in a subdivision meets the Town's specifications, the other roads in the area may not be adequate to handle the increased traffic resulting from the subdivision. In this case, the developer/sub-divider should pay his proportion of the cost to upgrade these off-site roads. The

extent of these improvements should bear a rational connection to the needs created by and the benefits conferred upon the subdivision. Factors to be used in determining the allocation of costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The standard to which the town presently maintains the roads;
- The frontage of the proposed subdivision;
- The potential traffic increase necessitated by the proposed subdivision;
- The potential for development in the traffic shed served by these access roads; and
- The number of residences presently fronting on or normally trafficking these roads and compliance with the Town's Master Plan.

The Planning Board should also be aware that RSA 674:36 allows the Board to provide against such scattered or premature subdivision of land as would involve danger or injury to health, safety, or prosperity by reason of the lack of transportation or other public services, or necessitate the excessive expenditure of public funds for supply of such services. It would be wise for the Board to review those areas of Town in which development would be considered scattered and premature, and be sure that they are zoned appropriately to discourage development, until the infrastructure can be upgraded in a cost effective manner. A capital improvements plan is an excellent way to track and plan for road improvements.

SCENIC ROADS

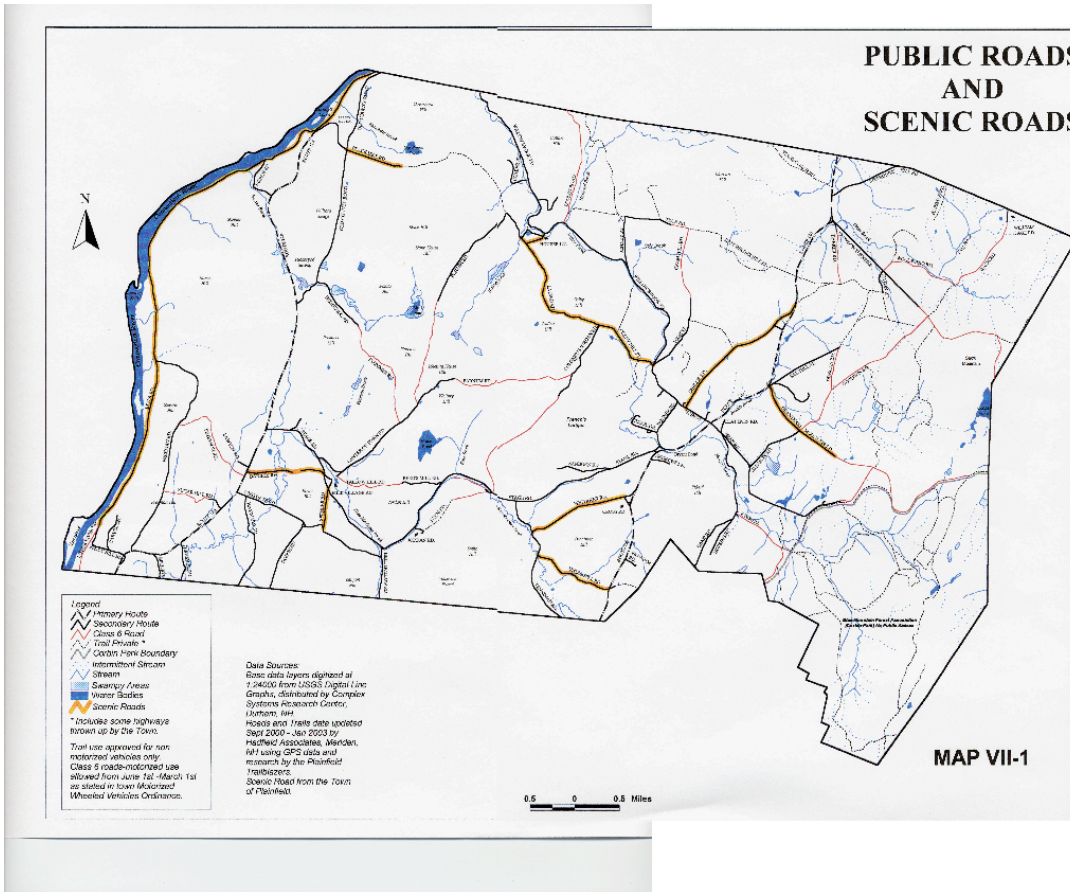
Another important piece of State legislation with respect to town roads is Scenic Roads (RSA 253, Sections 17 and 18). This law allows towns to designate, by town meeting vote, any road (other than Class I or Class II State highways) as a scenic road. Abutting property owners must be notified of the proposed scenic road designation prior to the town meeting.

Once a road has been designated as a scenic road, any repair, maintenance, reconstruction or paving work shall not involve or include the cutting or removal of medium and large-sized trees (with a circumference of 15 inches or more at a point four feet from the ground), or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls, except with the prior written consent of the Planning Board or any other official town body designated at the town meeting to implement the law, and after a public hearing has been held.

The Scenic Road Law is flexible, however, in that it allows the road agent, without consent, to cut trees, shrubs, vegetation and any other natural or manmade obstructions within three feet of the road traveled way. In emergency situations, the highway superintendent may also cut and remove trees with the written consent of the Selectmen and without a public hearing.

Designation of a road as scenic does not affect the eligibility of the town to receive state construction aid pursuant to RSA 241. In addition, a scenic road designation does not affect the rights of any landowner with respect to work on his own property.

MAP VII-1 PUBLIC ROADS AND SCENIC ROADS



VII. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

The main purpose of a scenic road designation is to help protect the scenic qualities of that road; the trees and stone walls provide a great deal of visual character to the area. The designation of a road as scenic is a declaration by the town that the road has important visual qualities, which must be recognized and treated with care.

Trees can still be cut and stonewalls can still be removed along scenic roads when there is good reason. This law does not affect regular, routine maintenance and repairs of the road. Perhaps most significantly, the designation of a road as scenic establishes a mechanism for public input before the highway department carries out its work. To property owners along the road, this opportunity is much preferred over having to react emotionally while the work is going on or after it has been completed.

The sections of roads that have been designated as scenic roads are:

- Colby Hill Road from Mill Bridge westerly to its junction with Columbus Jordan Road;
- River Road from Ferry Hill Road northerly to State Route 12A;
- Daniels Road from State Route 12A easterly to its junction with Stage Road;
- Spencer Road from Stage Road southerly to its junction with Westgate Road;
- Kenyon Road from Westgate Road easterly to its junction with Hell Hollow Road;
- Underhill Road between Route 120 and Penniman Road;
- Whitaker Road;
- Grantham Mountain Road;
- Harriman Road;
- Black Hill Road from its intersection with Old County Road easterly to the point where it ceases to be a Town maintained road;
- Pierce Road from Route 12A to River Road;
- Chellis Road from Main Street to Meriden to Route 120; and
- Ladieu Road from Junction of Colby Hill Road and Columbus Jordan Road to Willow Brook Road.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION MODES

Although the Town is located conveniently to the interstate system, there are other forms of transportation available, both for travel in the Region and to link the Region with the rest of New

VII. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

England, the United States and the world. Advance Transit and Community Transit Services provide bus service in the Upper Valley and Claremont/Newport areas respectively. Neither serves Plainfield directly. Advance Transit runs a free fare zone between Hanover, Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center and Lebanon.

Air service is available from Lebanon Municipal Airport. Both train and bus connections may be made in White River Junction.

Passenger Air Service

Lebanon Regional Airport

Plainfield residents have convenient access to air transportation at Lebanon Regional Airport. Passenger air service is available to New York City, Newark, Boston, Philadelphia and Atlantic City. The airport can be reached from Plainfield by taxi.

A citizens' advisory committee has been established to review topics such as noise, levels of service and safety. Plainfield is represented on this board.

Bus Service

Vermont Transit

Vermont Transit operates private bus service between Burlington and Boston, Logan Airport, and Springfield, continuing on to New York. Service operated by Greyhound occurs south of Springfield and north from Burlington to Montreal. Additional service is operated through White River Junction. Dartmouth Coach also operates a private bus service between Hanover, Lebanon, to Boston North Station and Logan Airport.

Passenger Rail Service

AMTRAK Passenger Rail Service

AMTRAK passenger rail service, operating between Montreal and Washington, D.C. via New York City, makes one stop per day in each direction in White River Junction and Claremont junction, both are about 8 miles from Plainfield. There is no direct public transit link with the rail station, although taxi service is available into Plainfield.

Reducing Traffic Congestion

Bicycling, ridesharing and public transit are very simple and effective methods to reduce traffic volumes and mitigate congestion. The effectiveness becomes obvious when one realizes if everyone shared a ride with only one other person, there could be an immediate 50% reduction in traffic.

Plainfield's, and the Region's, population is growing. Similarly, traffic is increasing. The average annual rates of growth for both population and traffic volumes are not as high as that of the late 1980's. The significant fact is that additional future traffic congestion beyond the current projections may result from changes in the population and economic growth outside of Plainfield. Steps need to be taken now to remedy the progression of traffic congestion problems. Already, in West Lebanon there are congested intersections and roads. Without traffic mitigation measures, like ridesharing and

public transit, the congestion could get worse and have a more immediate and direct impact throughout Town.

Alternative transportation modes have been tried in numerous areas of the nation with some success.

Widening, or adding road capacity has been, and still is, environmentally controversial, aesthetically unpleasing, and unsuccessful in solving roadway congestion. The environmental impacts of widening a road are obvious. Widening a road to mitigate congestion has been, and will be, unsuccessful due to triple convergence, triple convergence has occurred where a road is widened, immediately increasing a road's capacity, but congestion reappears soon after the completion of construction. There is a spatial, modal and time convergence of commuters.

Spatial Convergence: People who used to take an alternate route now find the widened road to be less congested, so they switch to the widened road.

Modal Convergence: People who used to take the bus or rideshare now find the road has a lower amount of congestion, so they switch back to driving alone along the widened road.

Time Convergence: People who used to leave just before or just after the peak hour now use the road during the peak hour.

Upper Valley Rideshare

The Region is fortunate to have two states that have provided funds to form a strong rideshare program. The Upper Valley Rideshare Program (UVRS) began as a division of the Vermont Rideshare Program five years ago through Advance Transit. The focus was mainly on Hartford, Norwich, Hanover, Lebanon, and New Hampshire residents commuting into Vermont. The New Hampshire rideshare funding began about 3.5 years ago, and has provided coverage for all of the twenty-seven New Hampshire towns in the UVLSRPC Region. UVRS combines both the New Hampshire and Vermont programs, and is the most successful rural program in the Vermont Statewide Rideshare Program, and the only program of its kind in New Hampshire.

UVRS is doing very well. Fifteen percent of all registrants form carpools, which is well above the national average 3% to 5% of any program's total enrollment. UVRS' s current database has approximately 400 active participants. An interesting statistic is that the majority of participants at this time are women, and almost 100% are non-smokers.

Annually, the Rideshare Coordinator contacts everyone in the database to review personal data, car pool status, program participation, and continuation status. Response has been positive and interest was high among those enrolled in the Program. Almost everyone voiced a desire to stay in the Program, and to continue to receive regular updates about available carpools and new carpool partners. This is a strong vote for the Program considering that employers and municipalities offer little or no incentives to rideshare, and that the price of gas is lower than it was in 19811.

On-site presentations at companies, public events, and direct mail promotions have generated the highest number of enrollments in the Program. Radio and print media play an important role in promoting general awareness. Also, the Guaranteed Ride Home Program offers an extra measure of

VII. PUBLIC ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

security to rideshare users by guaranteeing the cost of their ride home in an emergency (up to \$50/emergency), four times per year, after meeting qualification requirements.

GOALS:

1. Provide an efficient and appropriate transportation network throughout the Town that includes vehicular and non-motorized modes.
2. Integrate present and future highway planning with local and regional land use planning and socioeconomic development.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Encourage commercial and higher density residential development in and near the village area and discourage the spread of strip commercial development along Route 12A. and Route 120.
2. Continue to consider the effect that proposed subdivisions have on off-site roads and, in certain cases, require the developer/sub-divider to improve off-site roads as a condition for subdivision approval.
3. Implement improvements in will pedestrian and bicycle travel.
4. Consider the need for public transportation service.
5. Review and comment on the effects of regional development, particularly in Lebanon and West Lebanon, on local community patterns and provision of emergency services.

VIII. POPULATION

INTRODUCTION

Since one of the purposes of a master plan is to provide and improve facilities for people's lives, work and families, an analysis of changing trends in a town's population is of basic importance. Any significant changes in the population will consequently affect land use patterns, the town's economic base, and local demand for housing, transportation, human services and community facilities. Awareness of shifts in the population composition is also prerequisite for planning; specifically, changes in the school age and elderly populations could require corresponding reviews of educational, housing and service policies.

Three facets of Plainfield's population are examined here. First, natural increase and migration patterns affecting Plainfield's population growth are analyzed. Then, the age distribution of Plainfield residents is considered. Finally, population projections through the year 2020 for the Town are set forth, indicating the degree of change which may be expected in the next 20 years. Information for this report was derived from a variety of sources. The U.S. Census of Population and Housing provided most of the data. Publications from the New Hampshire Office of State Planning (OSP) and the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission were used as supplementary sources of information.

POPULATION GROWTH

Plainfield's population began to slowly increase after 1920 and climbed from 1,050 in 1950 to 2241 in 2000. The rate of growth accelerated in the late 1960's and 1970's but has decreased in the last decade. The growth is due to increasing employment opportunities in the neighboring communities of Lebanon, Hanover, Claremont and Hartford. A variety of employers required an increasingly large labor force. Selecting these new employment opportunities resulted in a changed lifestyle for many Plainfield residents and the near extinction of the small farm. With the influx of newcomers and a change in economic structure, Plainfield now struggles to retain its rural charm and desirability as a residential community.

Tables VIII-1 and VIII-2, and Chart VIII-1, on the following pages, present the historical trend of Plainfield's population growth. Table VIII-2 shows that from a peak of 11% in 1790, Plainfield comprised a slowly decreasing proportion of Sullivan County's population until 1930. After an early twenty-year surge, the Town's population growth did not keep pace with that of the County as a whole, and the Town's share of County population fell to only 3.5%. Since 1930, however, Plainfield has grown fast enough to raise its share of the County population to 5.5 % in the year 2000.

The growth experienced by Plainfield since 1960 has resulted in rapid development of its land base. Table VIII-3 summarizes the population density of selected communities in the Upper Valley Region. Plainfield's land area is slightly larger than most of its neighbors. With a population of 2241, the Town is one of the more sparsely settled communities in the area, having a density of 42.3 persons per square mile. Only Croydon (17.6 persons per square mile) and Cornish (30.0 persons per square mile) have lower population density; on the other hand, Lebanon (304.3 persons per square mile) and Claremont (298.2 persons per square mile) are seven times as densely populated.

TABLE VIII-1-HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

Plainfield, Tri-Town Area*, Sullivan County, New Hampshire; 1767-1990

TABLE VIII-1-HISTORICAL POPULATION TRENDS

Year	Plainfield	% Chg	Tri-Town*	% Chg	Sullivan Cty	% Chg	State of NH	% Chg
1767	112				816			
1773	275	145.6			2,184	167.6		
1775	308	12			2,610	19.5		
1783	-				2,595	-0.6		
1786	580	-			6,259	141.2		
1790	1024	76.6	3548		9,107	45.5	141,885	
1800	1435	40.1	4980	40.4	14,537	59.6	183,858	29.6
1810	1463	2	5774	15.9	16,514	13.6	214,460	16.6
1820	1460	-0.2	5942	2.9	18,533	12.2	244,161	13.9
1830	1581	8.3	6273	5.8	19,669	6.1	269,328	10.3
1840	1552	-1.8	6708	6.5	20,340	3.4	284,574	5.7
1850	1392	10.3	6645	-0.1	19,375	-4.7	317,976	11.7
1860	1620	16.4	7026	5.7	19,041	-1.7	326,073	2.6
1870	1589	-1.9	7659	9	18,058	-5.2	318,300	-2.4
1880	1372	-13.7	8455	10.4	18,161	0.6	346,991	9.0
1890	1173	-14.5	9320	10.2	17,304	-4.7	376,530	8.5
1900	1114	-5	10666	14.4	18,009	4.1	411,588	9.3
1910	987	-11.4	11972	12.2	19,337	7.4	430,572	4.6
1920	853	-13.6	13165	9.9	20,922	8.2	443,083	2.9
1930	858	0.6	15004	13.9	24,286	16.1	465,293	5.0
1940	970	13.1	15994	6.6	25,442	4.8	491,524	5.6
1950	1011	4.2	20581	28.7	26,441	3.9	533,242	8.5
1960	1071	5.9	22983	11.7	28,067	6.1	606,921	13.8
1970	1323	23.5	24696	7.5	30,949	10.3	737,578	21.5
1980	1749	32.2	28216	14.3	36,063	16.5	920,475	27.8
1990	2056	17.6	30799	9.2	38,592	7	1,109,252	20.5
2000	2241	9	33786	9.7	40,458	4.8	1,235,786	11.4

*Hartford, Hanover, Lebanon

SOURCE: U.S. Census

CHART VIII-1 PLAINFIELD POPULATION 1767-2000

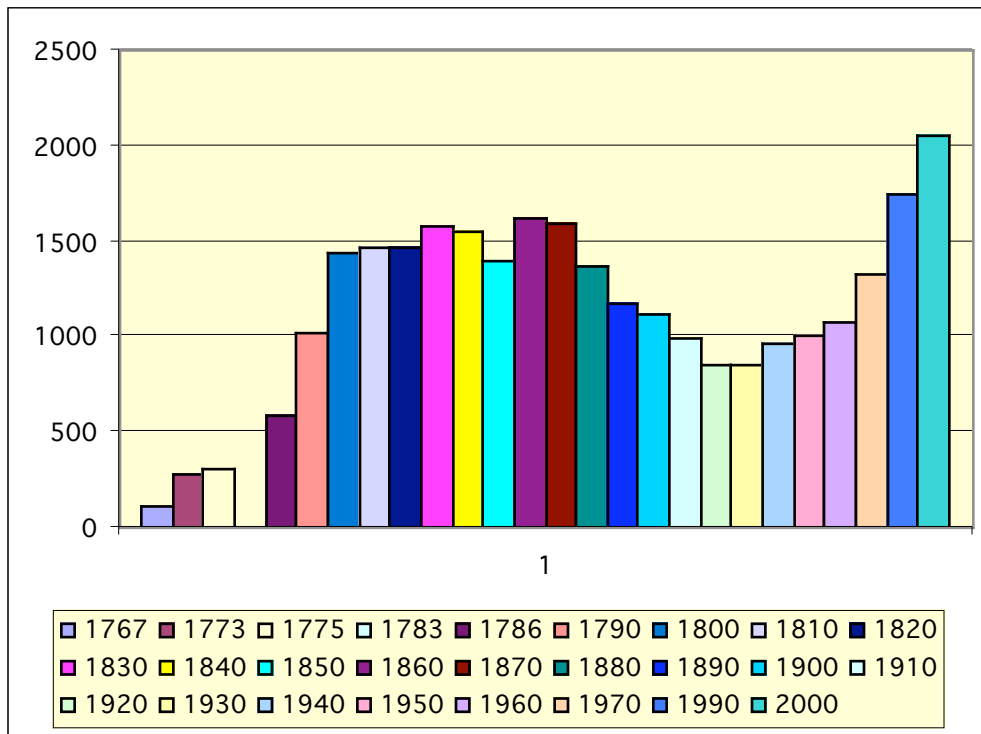


TABLE VIII-2-RELATIVE SHARES OF POPULATION

Plainfield, Sullivan County, New Hampshire, U.S.A.; 1767-1990

TABLE VIII-2 RELATIVE SHARES OF POPULATION

Year	Plainfield	% of Sul Cty	Sullivan Cty	%of NH	NH State	% US	U.S.A.
1767	112	13.7	816	-	-	-	-
1773	275	12.6	2,184	-	-	-	-
1775	308	11.8	2,610	-	-	-	-
1783	580	22.4	2,595	-	-	-	-
1786			6,259	-	-	-	-
1790	1,024	11.2	9,107	6.4	141,885	3.61	3,929,214
1800	1,435	9.9	14,537	7.9	183,858	3.46	5,308,483
1810	1,463	8.9	16,514	7.7	214,460	2.96	7,239,881
1820	1,460	7.9	18,533	7.6	244,161	2.53	9,638,453
1830	1,581	8	19,669	7.3	269,328	2.09	12,866,029
1840	1,552	7.6	20,340	7.1	284,574	1.66	17,069,453
1850	1,392	7.2	19,375	6.1	317,976	1.37	23,191,876
1860	1,620	8.5	19,041	5.8	326,073	1.03	31,443,321
1870	1,589	8.8	18,058	5.7	318,300	0.8	39,818,449
1880	1,372	7.6	18,161	5.2	346,991	0.69	50,155,783
1890	1,173	6.8	17,304	4.6	376,530	0.6	62,947,714
1900	1,114	6.2	18,000	4.4	411,588	0.54	75,994,575
1910	987	5.1	19,337	4.5	430,572	0.47	92,228,496
1920	853	4.1	20,922	4.7	443,083	0.42	106,021,537
1930	858	3.5	24,286	5.2	465,293	0.38	123,202,624
1940	970	3.8	25,442	5.2	491,524	0.37	132,164,569
1950	1,011	3.8	26,441	5.0	533,242	0.35	151,325,798
1960	1,071	3.8	28,067	4.6	606,921	0.34	179,323,175
1970	1,323	4.3	30,949	4.2	737,578	0.36	203,211,926
1980	1,749	4.8	36,063	3.9	920,475	0.4	226,504,825
1990	2,056	5.3	38,592	3.5	1,109,252	0.4	248,710,000
2000	2,241	5.5	40,458	3.3	1,235,786	0.44	281,421,906

TABLE VIII-3-POPULATION DENSITY

SELECTED UPPER VALLEY-LAKE SUNAPEE REGION COMMUNITIES

TABLE VIII-3 POPULATION DENSITY

Town	Land Area Sq Miles	No. Persons Per Square Mile				
		1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Plainfield	53.0	20.2	25.0	33.0	37.9	42.3
Claremont	44.1	307.6	322.8	330.5	315.6	289.2
Cornish	42.6	26.0	29.8	32.6	38.9	39.0
Croydon	37.5	8.32	10.5	12.2	16.7	17.6
Enfield	43.1	43.3	54.3	73.6	92.2	107.1
Grantham	28.0	11.9	13.0	25.1	44.5	77.4
Hanover	50.1	146.3	169.4	181.9	183.7	216.6
Hartford	46.0	138.2	140.8	173.1	204.5	225.4
Lebanon	41.3	225.2	235.6	269.8	295.2	304.3
Newport	43.6	125.2	135.2	142.7	147.6	143.8

SOURCE: 1993 Regional Profile of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Region, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, and U.S. Census

Even with its large land base and relatively low density, Plainfield must plan wisely for the future to assure that the Town will grow in a desirable manner. Growth increases density, which, in turn, decreases the amount of open space, places greater demand on local resources and increases the possibility of conflicting land uses. The planning, which Plainfield does now, can preclude untimely and unmanageable future expansion.

Natural Increase and Migration

The two components of population change are natural increase and migration. Natural increase is defined as the excess of resident births over deaths; migration refers to the number of people moving into and out of a town. If a community has little in- and out-migration, almost all changes in population are attributable to natural factors alone. The change in Plainfield's population is broken down as follows:

The population at the close of a period is equal to the population at the start of the period plus natural increase during the period, plus net migration during the period.

During the decade of the 1970's, Plainfield's total population increased by 426 residents, or 32%. Natural increase accounted for 34% of the change and the remainder, 280 people or 66% of the newcomers, were in-migrants.

During the 1980's, population growth slowed. The total population increase was 307 residents, a 17.5% increase. During that time, 38% of the population increase (118 people) can be attributed to natural increase, and 62% (189 people) was the result of in-migration.

During the 90's a smaller population increase occurred of only 185 persons of which 75 were attributable to natural increase and 110 were due to in-migration.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the age composition of a community is vital in planning for future needs. A change in the school age population, for example, may indicate a need for modification in educational policies. Likewise, a shift to a more elderly population would require that a different type and range of services and facilities be developed. The median age of Plainfield residents is slightly younger than Sullivan County and slightly older than the New Hampshire median, as the table below shows. In addition, this table shows a general aging trend taking place in the past two decades in all three geographic regions, as it has nationally.

TABLE VIII-4-MEDIAN AGES

Plainfield, Sullivan County, New Hampshire

TABLE VII-4 MEDIAN AGES

Town	1970	1980	1990	2000
Plainfield	26.7	30.0	34.5	40.0
Sullivan County	30.0	31.6	35.3	40.0
New Hampshire	27.8	30.1	32.8	37.1

SOURCE: U.S. Census; 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000.

Table VIII-5 shows age distribution by group and Chart VIII-3 presents this data graphically. The effect of the net in-migration to Town shows up in the 20-64 age group. This is the group with the greatest numerical and percentage increase. It is interesting to note that the 5-19 age group has been relatively stable at about 470 persons, in part due to in-migration.

TABLE VIII-5-AGE DISTRIBUTION

Plainfield- 1990, 2000

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Age Group	1990		2000	
	#People	% Total Population	# People	% Total Population
0-4	151	7.3	137	6.1
5 to 19	464	22.6	471	21
20 to 64	1,263	61.4	1405	62.7
65+	178	8.7	228	10.2

SOURCE: U.S. Census; 1990, 2000

CHART VIII-3-HISTOGRAM OF AGE DISTRIBUTION

Plainfield- 1970-2000

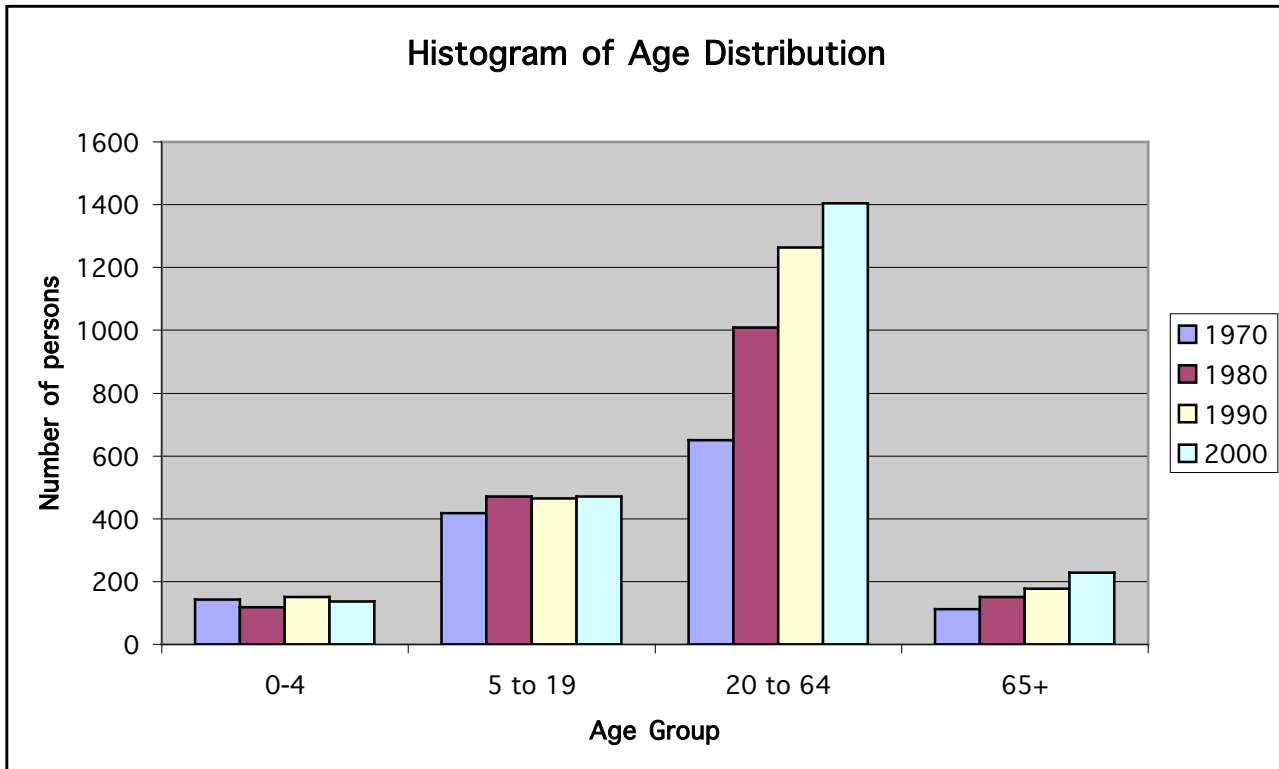


Chart VIII-3 above shows that the pre-school population has not risen in numbers over the past four decades and that the school age population is similarly stable. Both however are shrinking as a percent of the overall population. The working age population continues to increase in numbers and as a percent of the overall population as do the population over 65.

Table VIII-6 and VIII-6.1 portrays the age and sex distribution for the Town in 1990 and 2000. For both sexes, there has been a large increase in the 35-44 age group. Interestingly, there are more women in the 25-44 age group than men. This gender balance shifts to favor the men in the 45-64 age group. Perhaps reflecting the slightly longer life expectancies of women, there are more women than men in the over 65 years age group.

TABLE VIII-6- GENDER DISTRIBUTION

Plainfield- 1990, 2000

Table VIII-6 Age and Sex Distribution

Age Group	Male			Female			Total		
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000
0-4	63	82		55	69		118	151	137
5 to 9	71	78		68	83		139	161	173
10 to 14	86	93		77	73		163	166	160
15-19	91	72		78	65		169	137	138
20-24	58	52		54	44		112	96	72
25-34	164	157		177	179		341	336	237
35-44	112	206		129	219		241	425	446
45-54	93	135		73	113		166	248	424
55-64	73	87		76	71		149	158	226
65-74	46	57		46	62		92	119	138
75 +	21	26		38	33		59	59	90
TOTALS	878	1,045	1136	871	1,011	1105	1,749	2,056	2241

TABLE VIII-7-PLAINFIELD WORKING AGE POPULATION BY GENDER

PLAINFIELD WORKING AGE/RETIRED POULATION BY SEX

	Individuals	
	Number	%
18 years and older	1672	74.6
Male	833	37.2
Female	839	37.4
21 years and older	1621	72.3
62 years and older	262	12.6
65 years and older	228	10.2
Male	112	5.0
Female	116	5.2

Pre-school and Student Population

The pre-school (0-4) population in Plainfield peaked in the 1990's in numbers and has since decreased as a percentage of the total population. In 2000 the preschoolers dropped in number as well as a percentage of the overall population. In 1980, there were 118 pre-school children 0-4 (6.8%), compared to 151 pre-schoolers in 1990 (7.3% of the total population). In 2000 the number dropped to 137, 6% of the population. The student age population (5-19) was relatively stable in actual number (from 471 to 464 to 471) over the past two decades. Table VIII-7 below, shows Plainfield School District enrollment trends 1986 - 2000. After a peak in 1989, there has been a gradual decline in enrollment in recent years.

TABLE VIII-8-PLAINFIELD SCHOOL POPULATION

Year	K-8	9 to 12	Total
1986	255	116	371
1987	282	115	397
1988	304	119	423
1989	316	117	433
1990	309	121	430
1991	303	125	428
1992	314	113	427
1993	300	117	417
1994	288	120	408
1995	295	111	406
1996	285	84	369
1997	270	84	354
1998	270	90	360
1999	284	91	375
2000	283	81	364

Working-Age Population (Labor Force)

The working-age group (18-64) is often referred to as the labor force, although not all persons in the group are actually employed or looking for work. This group accounted for the main portion of Plainfield's population increase in the 1980's and 1990's, jumping from 1,063 people in 1980 to 1,312 in 1990(19%) and to 1405 in 2000 (7%).

Elderly Population

The elderly (senior citizen) population is made up of person's aged 65 and over. Although most people in this age group are retired, some are employed full or part-time. As is the case nationally, in Plainfield, there are marginally more (5.2% to 5.0%) women than men in this age bracket. The size of this population group in the Town rose from 151 to 178 persons between 1980 and 1990, and in the last decade this group increased to 228 persons, from 8.6% to 10.2% of the population. The

following table compares Plainfield's elderly population (as a percentage of total population) to those of Sullivan County and the State, showing that the Town actually hosts a much lower percentage of elderly people than do other areas.

TABLE VIII-9-ELDERLY* POPULATION

<i>Table VIII-8 % Population over 65</i>				
	1970	1980	1990	2000
Plainfield	8.6	8.6	8.7	10.2
Sullivan County	12.1	13.3	14.7	15.8
New Hampshire	10.6	11.2	11.2	12

Plainfield, Sullivan County, New Hampshire; 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000

*Elderly includes residents 65 years and older

SOURCE: U.S. Census; 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000.

The population of the United States shows a relative increase in the over-65 age group, as the "baby-boom" generation gets older and the effect of lower fertility rates is felt. Plainfield, Sullivan County and New Hampshire are, no doubt, influenced by this population shift. If the in-migration continues at its current rate, it can be expected that the elderly age group will increase as a percentage of total population, and the Town will have to consider meeting the special needs of this greater proportion of its population.

POVERTY

TABLE VIII-10-POVERTY LEVELS

POVERTY LEVEL SELECT GEOGRAPHIC AREAS

	Families		Individuals	
	Number	%	Number	%
Plainfield	12	1.2	63	2.8
Sullivan County	565	5.2	3367	8.5
Lebanon	204	6.3	1089	8.8
Hanover	10	0.6	633	9.1
Grafton County	1033	5.1	6462	8.6
New Hampshire	13948	4.3	78530	6.6

TABLE VIII-11-POVERTY* DISTRIBUTION IN PLAINFIELD

*See Economic Chapter for definition of families below poverty line and poverty line distribution by household size

PLAINFIELD POVERTY DISTRIBUTION

	FAMILIES		INDIVIDUALS	
	Number	%	Number	%
Families below PL	12	1.8		
with children under 18	4	1.2		
with children under 5	2	1.8		
Female hshldr/no husband present	6	10.2		
with children under 18	4	8.3		
with children under 5	2	33.3		
Individuals below PL			63	2.8
18 and over			52	3.1
65 and older			11	4.7
with related children under 18			9	1.6
with related children 5-17			6	1.5
with unrelated individuals 15 and over			33	13

TABLE VIII-12-INCOME BY SOURCE

Plainfield Residents

EARNED INCOME, SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME,PUBLIC ASSISTANCE INCOM E

	Number	% Households
Households, Total	852	100
Median Household Income	57083	
Hshlds with Earned Income	750	88
Median Earned Income	63583	
Hshlds with SSI	180	12
Median SSI	12671	
Hshlds with Supplementary SSI	13	1.5
Median Supplementary SSI	5262	
Hshlds with Public Assistance Income	14	1.6
Median Public Assistance Income	3521	

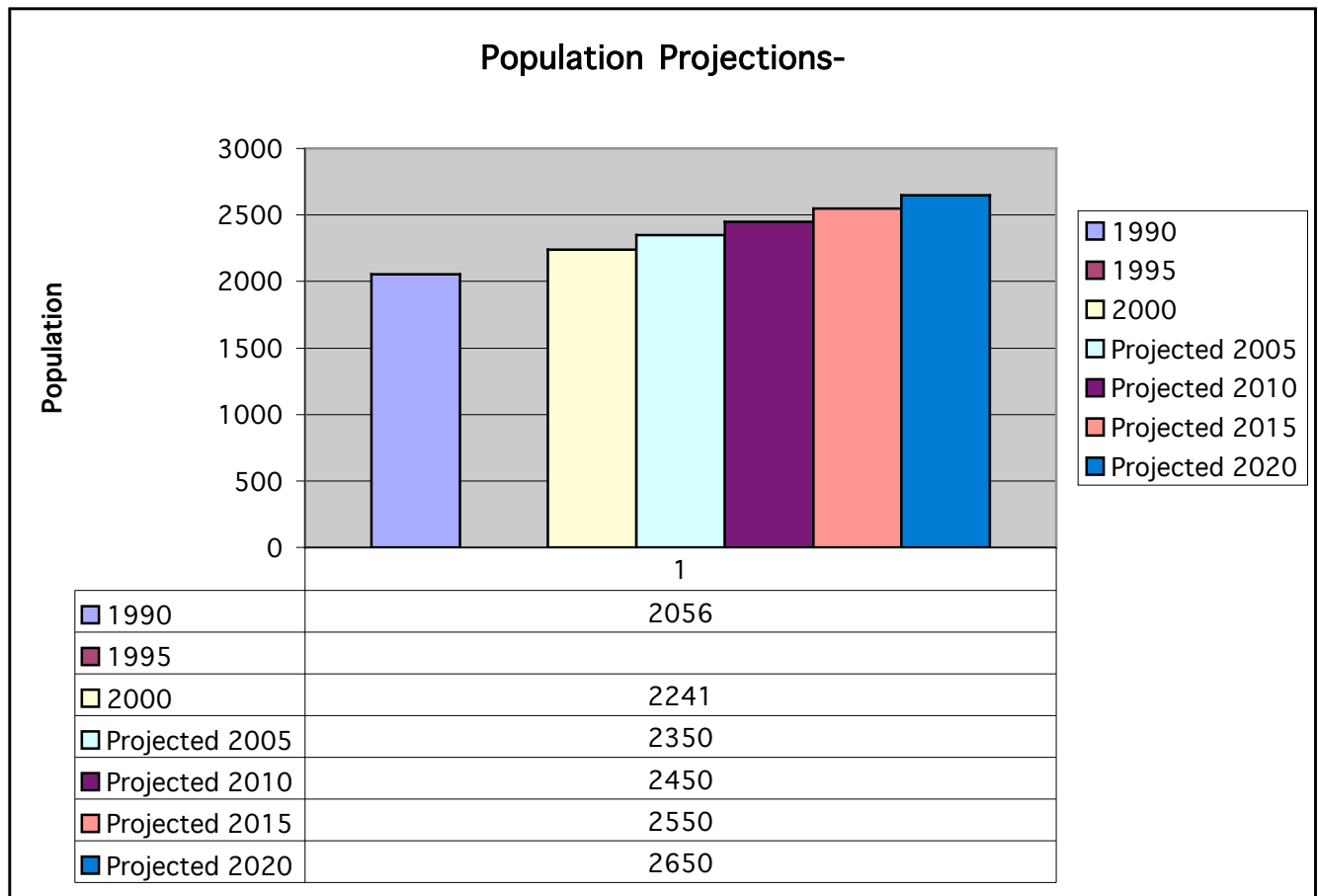
POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Unfortunately, a totally accurate method for predicting the future population of a small area has not yet been perfected. Any unexpected change in the economy, such as the addition of a large industry or the closing of a major employer, may drastically alter the reliability of a projection. Therefore, one should view population estimates as a general guide that must be updated continuously as new information becomes available, and as economic conditions change.

Chart VIII-9 and associated table present linear projections based on the 1990-2000 trend. New Hampshire Office of State Planning does provide a model for making projections that is based on a least squares fit of the past data. This model will generally reflect the more recent growth trends and this generally results in somewhat higher projections. The OSP model is based on a computer forecasting system (DEMOS), which also models the growth patterns of many distinct sectors of New Hampshire's population and economy, taking into account the important interrelationships, which exist among them. This revision of this plan does not include the OSP projections, which are due to be revised in 3Q02. The straight line projection is based on the increases experienced in the period from 1990 – 2000. This projection, of course, is based on the assumption that economic, social, institutional, cultural and natural conditions prevalent during the previous decades will remain generally unchanged for the projection period. This method estimates a lower level of growth and a more pessimistic view of the regional economy and of future trends than does the OSP model.

CHART VIII-13-POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Plainfield- 1990-2020



SUMMARY

In the, 1980-1990 decade Plainfield experienced a relatively large, 17.6%, increase in population, compared to Sullivan County (7.0%), or New Hampshire (20.5%) as a whole. In the 1990-2000 decade the growth in Plainfield was a more modest 9% compared to 9.7% in the Lebanon/Hanover/Hartford area. Sullivan County grew at only 4.8% in the latter decade while New Hampshire grew at 11.4%. Compared to its neighbors, Plainfield is sparsely settled, with 42.3 people per square mile. Plainfield owes some of its population gains to in-migration. The 20-64 age group is now 64% of the 2000 population and the over 65 population is now 10.2% of the population. The size of the 0-4 age group is currently 7.3% of the population. The 5-17 age group is 22.6% of the population, which is a decrease over previous years. Plainfield has experienced small gains in its potential labor force and losses in its school-aged population. However, population projections are the basis for much of our future planning for the community.

IX. LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

Plainfield enjoys a diverse natural environment that has shaped its history and today provides the Town its rural character. These resources include large blocks of forest land, productive farm soils, a rich plant and animal habitat, scenic views, surface and drinking water supplies. Plainfield's land use plan is based on the premise that Plainfield's natural resources should be conserved. Future development of the Town should be directed and limited by the ability of the environment to support that development.

RETROSPECTIVE

The 1997 Master Plan had as a foundation the 1987 Master Plan (the original master plan). The original Master Plan included much of the Town history and set forth some of what was perceived to be the basic community beliefs on development and growth. A comprehensive Community Attitude Survey conducted in 1993 explored and re-enforced the community mind on these issues. The 1997 Plan included Goals and Recommendations for each of the main sections of the Plan. Many of these recommendations have been implemented through changes in the Town Ordinances and in general are seen to be moving the Town towards its' overall objectives.

The Town has grown some 9% in population over the 1990-2000 period and has more than doubled (1071 to 2241 over the past forty years. Lebanon in contrast grew 3% over the last ten years and some 35% over the last forty. Hanover grew 18% over the past 10 years and only 35% over the last forty.

PERSPECTIVE

Assuming that the growth rate over the past ten years is maintained then the Town will grow by some 400 people and 150 housing units over the next twenty years. This implies building activity will continue at the same level as experienced in recent years. Over the next ten years an average of 10 building permits per year will be issued, assuming of course other factors are not constraining this activity. A comparable level of sub-division activity will precede this. Availability and cost of lots will be a key factor influencing this. At present the available lots are skewed towards the large lot homes.

There is increasing development pressure on less suitable land. As development has progressed, the better, more easily developed lands have tended to undergo conversion to residential and commercial uses. During subsequent rounds, less suitable lands have become candidates for development. Often these parcels contain wetlands, steep slopes, rock outcrops, soils with bedrock within 18 inches of the soil surface, and other features that present difficulties for building, road and other construction activities.

- Plainfield should continue to regulate development so that natural resources are protected, with particular emphasis on surface water and groundwater resources. As growth pressures begin to turn toward the more marginal parcels, these same tracts of land often contain natural resources that ought to be protected. At minimum local regulations should require these resource areas to be shown

on any development proposal.

Land use considerations are closely related to the other topical areas addressed by this Master Plan. Other chapters describe historic and natural resources, housing and economic development, population trends, public facilities/services, roads and transportation, and recreation. This chapter describes the Town's current land use, the community attitudes toward growth and existing land use controls, provides a discussion of the development capability of Plainfield's land, and recommends guidelines for future growth of the Town.

CURRENT LAND USE

Plainfield's traditional development pattern persists today -a community with two village centers and a mix of residential, small business, agricultural and forestry uses throughout the Town. The residential, business and agricultural uses are found along the roads, with both managed and unmanaged forest filling in between the more intensively used road corridors. There are a large number of Class VI roads as well as public and private trails, which provide opportunity for outdoor recreation.

As shown in Table IX-1, developed lands continue to gain as a proportion of land in Town. Furthermore, in the 1953-1975 period, there was a trend of agricultural land reverting to forestry use, as field and pastures were left to grow up to trees. This no longer appears to be the case and we appear to be converting forested land to other uses at about the rate of .5% per year. As development has progressed, the better, more easily developed forest and agricultural lands have tended to undergo conversion to residential and commercial uses.

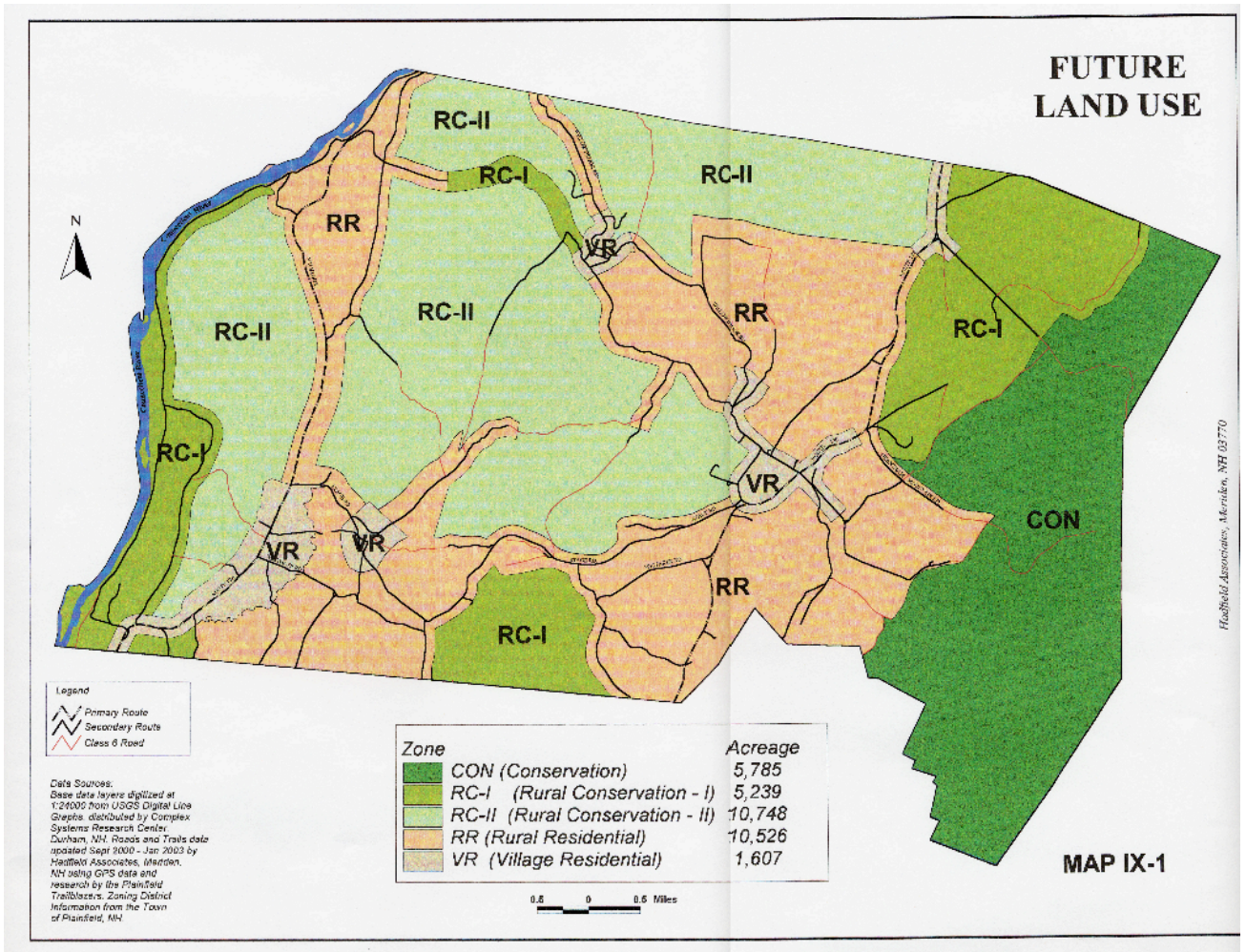
Forest conversion has many ecological and social impacts. These consequences include declining water quality, scenic and recreational degradation, habitat loss and deterioration, destruction of wilderness values, and loss of the productive forestland base. There are significant, economic impacts from these land base changes.

TABLE IX-1-LAND USE IN PLAINFIELD 1953, 1975 and 2000

USE	1953		1975		2000	
	# Acres	%	# Acres	%	# Acres	%
Agricultural	5665	17.2	4483	13.6	2933	8.8
Forestry	26309	80.1	27580	83.9	23860	71.4
Idle	634	1.9	458	1.3	1488	4.5
Developed	239	.6	326	.9	5136	15.3
Total	32847		32847		33417	

Source: 1953/175 Data: Agriculture, Forest and Related Land Use in New Hampshire, 1952 to 1975, G.G. Coppelman, S.A.L. Pilgrim and D.M. Peschel, University of New Hampshire in cooperation with Soil Conservation Service, 1978.
1990 Data; Current Use Report

MAP IX-1 FUTURE LAND USE



Existing Land Use Controls

In Plainfield, zoning was adopted in 1971, with subsequent revisions and amendments, to protect the public health, safety and general welfare, and to carry out local goals and objectives in order to foster orderly community development, while preserving the natural resources and retaining the rural character of Plainfield. The Zoning Ordinance controls the type and intensity of land use and the location of structures on a parcel of land. The Plainfield Subdivision Regulations provide both standards and a procedure for the division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels. The Regulations guard against the creation of new development unless the land can be used safely without danger to health, peril from flood, poor drainage, excessive slope or other hazardous conditions.

Lot size, street frontage and driveway permits, as well as State approval of septic systems, where needed, are considered in the Planning Board's review of subdivision applications. Special requirements have been set forth in the Regulations and Zoning Ordinance pertaining to planned residential developments, condominiums and cluster housing. In 1998 a set of design guidelines (voluntary) was adopted by the Planning Board as one way to encourage new development with both a sense of place and belonging within the town.

The following zoning districts have been established in Plainfield, the purposes of which are briefly described below:

- Village Residential (VR) (1607 acres) - to encourage the development of residential centers of land suitable for building development, which will serve as a nucleus of community activity.
- Rural Residential (RR) (10,526 acres) - to encourage and maintain low-density rural character.
- Rural Conservation I (RC I) (5239 acres) - to encourage and maintain a low-density rural character on lands generally less suitable for development than in the RR district.
- Rural Conservation II (RC II) (10,748 acres) - to encourage limited use of lands with only minimal capabilities for development, and further maintain a rural low density use of dispersed land areas which are more remote than land areas in the RC I district.
- Conservation (CON) (5785 acres) - to discourage any active development of lands with marginal capabilities for development, to alleviate the possibilities of major costs to the Town for rendering services to such areas, and to encourage agriculture and forestry uses while preserving land with severe limitations for development in its natural state.
- Wetland Conservation Overlay (W) - to discourage any active development of permanent wetlands due to possible hazard to life and property to all concerned.
- Floodplain Overlay (F) - to satisfy minimum requirements for participation in the Natural Flood Insurance Program, which allows residents who own land in the affected areas to purchase flood insurance.

For each district, the Zoning Ordinance sets forth specific uses, lot sizes and development standards.

Recent Trends

In the past twenty years, residential growth has varied from 1 to 4 percent per year, with an average of two percent. If anything, residential growth can be called "steady" and continued residential growth is encouraged and expected. In order to accommodate this growth without a loss of visual character, the Town has adopted a set of architectural design guidelines to protect scenic vistas and to encourage the placing of structures in a way sensitive to the rural aesthetics valued in Town today. Recognizing the development patterns already established in the RCI area south of Plainfield Village, in the land adjacent to Route 12A in 1998 the Town approved a change in zoning RCI to VR for this area. In addition, change of the zoning of both Mill Village and Coreyville from VR to RR was considered but not acted on.

Table IX-3 on the following pages, shows subdivision and building permit activity over the past 27 years. Subdivision and building development have been distributed over the Town. Most activity has occurred where road frontage is available. Over the 1987-2000 period some 184 new lots were created through the sub-division process, and a total of 158 new Single Family Home permits were issued. The growth was fairly evenly distributed across the four geographical quadrants of the Town. Comparing the 1973-1986 total to the 1987-2000 totals it is apparent that the sub-division activity has abated but the home building continues at the same general pace. The increased level of building activity in the last three years has offset the early 90's slowdown.

With the advent of new telecommunications systems, such as the facsimile, modem and e-mail, many businesses are free to locate far from urban centres. The incidence of home-based business in Plainfield has increased significantly over the past ten years and is likely to continue to do so. In 1998 the Plainfield Zoning Ordinance on Home Businesses and Approved Cottage Businesses was updated/expanded ensure their adequacy both from a permissive and a prohibitive perspective. The goal of the ordinance is to enables small businesses to start and prosper without changing the visual character of the Town.

In Plainfield, home-based and Approved Cottage Businesses are allowed in the VR, RR, RC1 and RC2 zones

When businesses grow beyond those that comfortably fit in a rural, residential area, the Town Zoning Ordinance provides for growth via an Approved Business Project in the VR, RR, and RC1 zones

In the past ten years, land conservation has become more common. Development is limited on protected lands in order to conserve a particular natural resource or ecosystem. Some conservation easements guarantee public access in perpetuity. The Town should encourage the Conservation Committee and the Trail Blazers to plan a system of open spaces and trails to provide for outdoor recreation, resource protection and wildlife habitat. The system of open spaces should be considered part of the Town infrastructure, maintained and expanded each year and accessible to every area of Town.

Table IX-3- SINGLE/MULTI FAMILY HOME PERMITS

Year	Lots created	SFH/MFH Building Permits
2000	18	20
1999	11 (-2)	12
1998	10	13
1997	10	7
1996	5	7
1995	15	8
1994	12	4
1993	10	12
1992	9	8
1991	9	11
1990	39	16
1989	12*	18
1988	12*	21
1987	12*	13
Total 1987-2000	184	170
Total 1973-1986	302	163

*Estimate based on Town Records

DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY

The fundamental premise of the concept of development capability is that the natural features of the environment vary in their ability to support development. Steep slopes, flood-prone areas, wetland soils and the presence of bedrock at or near the surface can individually, or in concert, serve as major constraints to development. While it is, at times, possible to overcome such natural constraints through intensive engineering, this is often a costly and elaborate process. Instead, efficient and environmentally sound planning seeks to guide growth into areas with adequate natural capacity to support development.

One of the chief factors in assessing land capability is the capacity of the site to treat sewage effluent properly. Inadequate capability of the soil to treat septic effluent has already added excessive nutrients to the surface water; poor site planning can also cause contamination of private well waters by failed septic systems.

Natural constraints to development posed by land characteristics in Plainfield include: slopes greater than 15%, shallow to bedrock soils (within two feet of the surface), wetlands and floodplains. Soil characteristics in aquifer recharge areas and agricultural soils may be suitable for development, so special controls may be necessary to limit development in these areas in order to protect their intrinsic resource values.

Maps classifying Plainfield soils by slope, flood hazard, soil drainage and substratum permeability are available at the Town Offices. The Planning Board should use a geographic information system (GIS) to analyze the development capability of the Town, given current and possible land use plans.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

In 1993, Plainfield's residents were surveyed to provide the Town with perspectives and opinions about how Plainfield should develop. (This survey served as the basis for significant changes in the Town's zoning ordinance in 1997/1998.) The following is a brief summary:

The majority of respondents are permanent residents, most of whom have lived here for more than five years and own less than ten acres. They desire the uncrowded and quiet conditions/scenic quality of Plainfield and would like to see it remain a rural/agriculturally based town. Surveys indicate the majority of respondents want the rate of population growth to decrease or at least remain level at the present rate.

1. A majority of respondents prefer single-family residences throughout the Town to any other type of residential development. The majority do not favor multi-family dwellings or manufactured/mobile homes in parks or on individual lots. Cluster housing has gained some favor since the last Master Plan survey, with a mixed response as to where it should be permitted in Town.
2. The village residential areas are preferred to remain as residential, with the Plainfield, East Plainfield and Meriden village districts as possibly developing professional offices and retail/commercial uses. The Mill Village and Brook Rd./Ladieu Rd. village zones were noted as having recreational potential.

3. When asked to indicate a preference for more commercial growth in Town, 40.9% of respondents answered "yes", 32.5% said "no", and 26.6% were uncertain. The majority of respondents selected small home-based businesses and farms located throughout Town as preferred commercial uses. The preferred commercial uses in the village districts were auto service/repair, retail/wholesale sales, mini-marts, gas stations and personal services. Respondents did not indicate a preference for heavy industry, shopping centers, or industrial parks anywhere in Town.
4. Surveys indicate that the majority of respondents would like to see commercial development take place within or adjacent to village centers and favored establishing commercial zones, with Routes 12A and 120 suggested as locations.(Implemented in 1998 in Approved Business Project section of Ordinance). By a slim majority, respondents wish to discontinue the current practice which allows light manufacturing to be permitted in every zone but Conservation, Wetlands and Floodplain districts (50.6% for discontinuing and 49.3% for continuing). Most indicated that a new zone should be created for light industrial use.(Considered but rejected by Planning Board in 1998).
5. Special attributes describing Plainfield contributed by survey respondents are generally rural descriptions, but some specific features mentioned included the Meriden covered bridge, the farms, Plainfield Town Hall and French's Ledges. From a list of natural resources, survey respondents ranked wildlife habitat as the natural resource most in need of protection, with prime agricultural land being second in importance. The scenic view from Read's Hill on Rte. 12A and Plainfield Town Hall are the view and historic structure most often designated as being in need of protection. The Meriden Town Hall was the second most mentioned historic structure.
6. A majority of the respondents supported using tax dollars for the purchase of conservation easements for the purpose of conservation. The questionnaire results showed favorable ratings for the services provided by the Town and for the adequacy of all Town facilities, except for the two town halls, both of which have been renovated since the 1993 survey (the police station was omitted for respondents to rate).

FUTURE LAND USE

Given community attitudes, the Planning Board should continue to review, revise and amend regulations and ordinances in order to manage future growth in Plainfield. Looking ahead necessarily involves making assumptions about what the future will be like and adopting guidelines to direct development in desirable ways. Certainly, it is assumed that Plainfield will continue to be a desirable place to live and that the protection of open space, critical natural resources and scenic vistas should be vigorously encouraged in all planning for the future.

As growth pressures begin to turn toward the more difficult to develop parcels, these same tracts of land often contain natural resources that ought to be protected. Often these parcels contain wetlands, steep slopes, rock outcrops, soils with bedrock within 18 inches of the soil surface, and other features that present difficulties for building, road and other construction activities. Plainfield should continue to regulate development so that natural resources are protected, including surface water and groundwater resources. At a minimum the Planning Board should require these resource areas to be shown on any sub-division or development proposal.

In all cases the Planning Board should require that wetlands and surface waters be delineated for the proposed sub-divisions and site reviews. An emphasis should be placed on avoiding or minimizing the impacts of disturbance on these resources.

Where intense development is proposed it is recommended that the detail of a site-specific soil survey (SSS) be required. Such a map will help both the applicant and the planning board to identify areas with limitations for site development as well as areas that are suitable for locating structural improvements. Four criteria are recommended by the OSP to measure development intensity sufficient to warrant a site-specific soil map:

- Areas with average lot sizes less than two acres, without municipal water and sewer;
- Areas with average lot sizes less than one acre, with municipal water but without municipal sewer;
- Areas with less than 20,000 contiguous square feet of land that is not wetland and does not have any limiting physical features and without municipal water and sewer;
- Areas without water and sewer with soil complexes with dramatically different characteristics should require a SSS map.

If any of these criteria applies to a development proposal, the applicant should submit a site soil map and the planning board is justified in requiring it. Where larger lots or low intensity of development is proposed, the level of detail provided by a site specific soil map might not be necessary. The planning board may be able to make an informed decision on such applications based on the NRCS county soil survey maps.

The open space system is the backbone of modern development systems. The purpose of the (OSPD) open space compact development, is to promote a more compact development and more efficient use of land and supporting facilities requiring a smaller network of streets and utilities; promote the preservation of open space, farmland, recreation areas, green space, fields and woods, valuable wildlife habitat, and outstanding topographic, natural, and historic features; discourage the sprawling, land-consuming form of development usually resulting from conventional subdivision; promote the efficient provision of municipal services and protect existing and potential water supplies; maintain the rural and scenic character of the Town; promote siting of buildings, which is sensitive to existing natural and historic features; protect the value of real property; and provide a variety of types of living spaces and environments.

In 1999 the Town adopted a set of voluntary Architectural Design Guidelines that include recommendations on Open Space Development. It is recommended that the Town update the Planned Residential section of the Ordinance to better reflect current thinking on open space development.

Plainfield's light manufacturing businesses have been integrated well into the community and the Town encourages more of these types of businesses to locate in Town to provide job opportunities and enhance the tax base. Business growth poses a special challenge in Plainfield. With the desire to accommodate business, there is no wish to encourage large businesses with potentially adverse

environmental, traffic or tax base implications. The Planning Board has determined that it is in the best interest of the Town if business uses beyond home-based business locate in zoning districts aligned near major transportation arteries. In order to allow a concentration of businesses to locate with direct access to one of those major transportation corridors, but not encourage strip commercial development, appropriate changes and additions to zoning, building, and architectural ordinances and design guidelines are recommended. The goal of such changes is to focus light commercial and industrial development near state maintained highways, while continuing to promote and facilitate small-scale business development throughout the Town.

The Town also needs to recognize that for the very long term, a mix of acquiring land for public ownership, the use of conservation easements and some form of compact development (open space planning). to protect lands from development will be needed to ensure sustainability of the natural resource in areas with significant development pressures.

. The Planning Board should use a geographic information system (GIS) to analyze the development capability of the Town, given current and develop alternative land use plans. Future land use is summarized on the map at the end of this chapter.

MAP IX-2-FUTURE LAND USE

GOALS

1. Maintain Plainfield as the desirable place that it is today. Encourage ‘sense’ of place and ‘sense’ of belonging in all new development. Integrate land use planning with road system capability.
2. Preserve attractive vistas.
3. Sustain the natural environment of the Town to the benefit of its human and non-human inhabitants.
4. Continue to foster home-based businesses that interface well with the built and the natural environment.
5. Continue to concentrate intensive business use to a few areas in Town
6. Encourage the development of management plans for current use property.
7. Encourage greater use of public trails and recreational facilities.
8. To encourage landowners to implement conservation practices that protect the public's environmental quality and provide for landowners' business and stewardship needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Small town settlement patterns and open space development concepts should be reinforced. Specifically, consideration should be given to updating the Planned Residential Development section of the ordinance to better reflect and encourage current thinking on open space development.
2. Consider adopting a loop road ordinance to encourage open space development patterns and protection of front lots.
3. The Planning Board needs to consider zoning upgrades of certain lands to increase the availability of smaller lots.
4. Environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, shore land buffers and wildlife habitat should continue to be protected from disruptive land uses and should be shown on all subdivision proposals. Up-date ordinance to reflect best management practices.
5. Establish retail design and landscaping standards to encourage high quality design, and protect and improve the aesthetics of the community.
6. Encourage the Trail Blazers to continue to develop plans for a comprehensive long range trail plan for the town and work with the Conservation Commission and other interested land preservation groups to encourage land protection for important natural and historic resources, sites and scenic views in Plainfield.

7. Update local ordinances to ensure consistency with current standards and State requirements. In particular the current guides for on-site resource characterization and mapping, consistent with State statutes and administrative rules, i.e.,

Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual, Technical Report Y-87-1, Environmental Laboratory, Department of the Army, 1987;

- a. **Field Book for Describing and Sampling Soils: Version 1.1 National Soil Survey Center, NRCS, 1998;**
 - b. **Field Indicators for Identifying Hydric Soils in New England, Version 2, New England Interstate**
 - c. **Water Pollution Control Commission, 1998; and**
 - d. **Site Specific Soil Mapping Standards for New Hampshire and Vermont, Version 2.0, Society of Soil Scientists of Northern New England Publication No. 3, 1999;**
8. Require the certification or permitting of qualified professionals capable of preparing on-site information for development proposals as essential steps to protect the public and the environment
9. The Planning Board should use a geographic information system (GIS) to analyze the development capability of the Town, given current and possible land use plans.
10. Develop a long-term plan to acquire land for public ownership based on clear priorities, promote the use of conservation easements and some form of compact development (open space planning). Protect land from development to ensure sustainability of the natural resource in areas with significant development pressures.
11. Develop a plan to ensure that Best Management Practices are communicated to local landowners.